



"Nichts dauert
ewig,
der schönste
Jud' wird
schäbig."



“... memories are not ready-made reflections of the past, but reconstructions of it in the present. The formation of social memory is an active, on-going process that changes over time. What is being remembered and how it is remembered depends on the cultural frames, moral sensibilities, and demands of the present. But remembering is not the aim of the process; it is a medium of transformation. The strategies of the former prisoners and their descendants are aimed at transforming the legacy into heritage while simultaneously overcoming traumatic experiences of the past.”

Fröhlig, Florence, (2013) “A painful legacy of World War II: Nazi forced enlistment: Alsatian/Mosellan Prisoners of War and the Soviet Prison Camp of Tambov” thesis
Publication available at www.sub.su.se p.191

Photographs in this text are from the family collection, if not otherwise specified.

Lisa Tímar/Foldes had a camera and took many snapshots of life in Szeged from 1935 until she left for the USA in 1937. Some of the negatives survived and were given to me by her sister Éva Adler in 2006. I digitalized the ones that were possible to work with, unfortunately many of the negatives were deteriorated and could not be retrieved.

I have used a number of historical photographs licensed under Creative Commons from the online photo archives Fortepan.

Photographs from Szeged from 1980's-2016 were taken by Barbara Adler and Manuel Sellner.

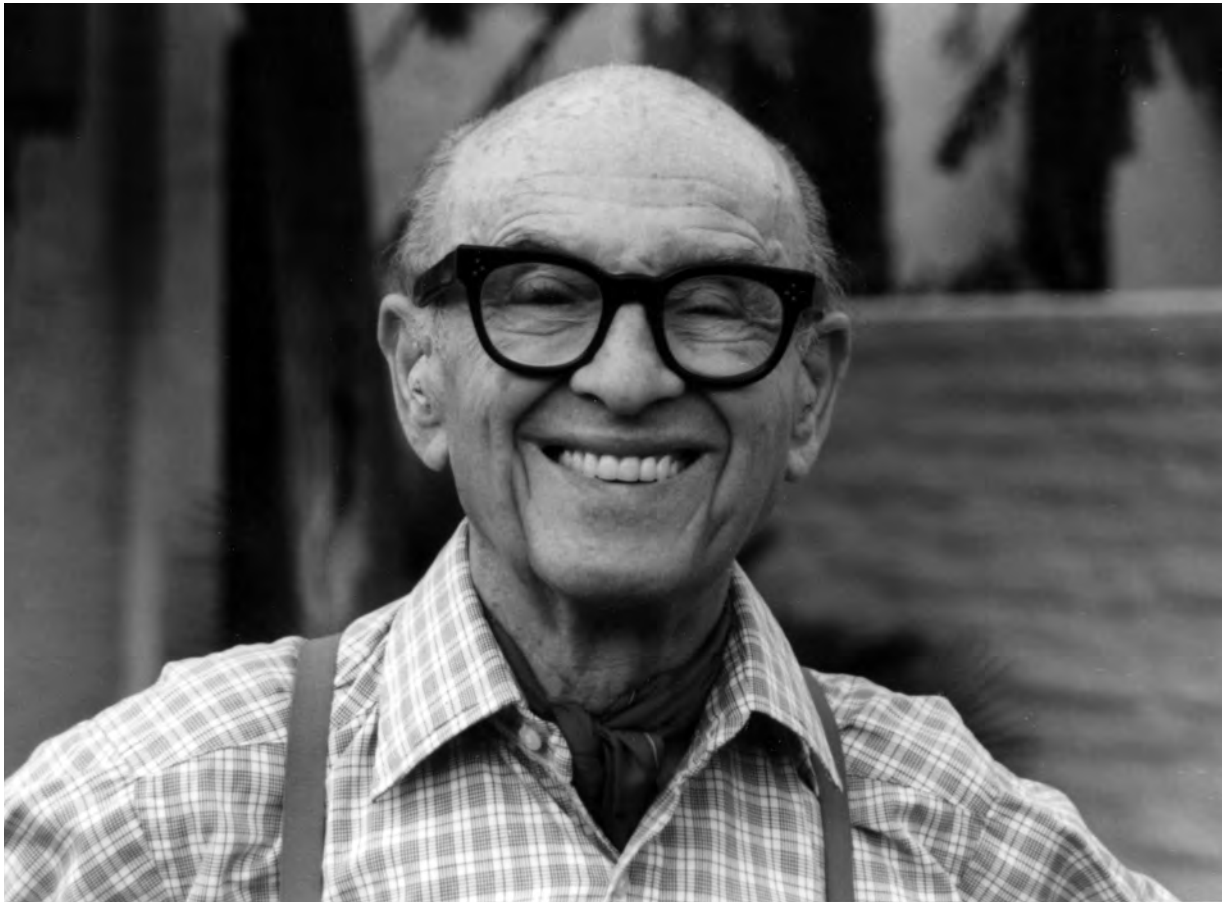
The collection of family photographs, documents and correspondence can be viewed in the collection:

ADLER FAMILY PAPERS, CIRCA 1880s-2003
2016.458.1

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW Washington, DC 20024-2126
Tel. (202) 479-9717

e-mail: reference@ushmm.org

The list of the items in the collection is included in the addendum.



Stories my uncle told

Testimony based on interviews with János Adler
conducted by Manuel Sellner in Los Angeles in 1994.

János Adler
Son of Rezső Adler and Borcsa Cziklay Adler

Born: October 22, 1905, Szeged, Hungary
Died: July 28, 1994, Los Angeles, California

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ABOUT NAMES:

Hungarian names include both surnames and given names. In the Hungarian language, whether written or spoken, names are given in the “Eastern name order” in which the family name is followed by given name. When these names are within an English text the order is reversed and written with the given name followed by the last name). Many of the people in this story are referred to by nicknames, diminutive names and often uncle or aunt is used in referring to an older person as baci or neni can be added to names. As Jancsi describes in the text, it was common for Jewish families to change their surnames at times.

The following are named in the text:

- János, Jancsi:** Hungarian names: Adler János changed his name to Arató János in 1946 and back again in 1948, he is referred to as Jancsi (the diminutive of János) American name: John A. Adler – Son of Rezső Adler and Borcsa Adler née Czikkai, brother of Denis and married Éva
- Éva:** Hungarian names: Timár Éva [maiden name], Adler Éva, Adler Jánosné, American name: Éva Adler
- Denis, Dini:** Hungarian name: Adler, Dénes Czikkai, American name: Denis C. Adler M.D., known as “Dini”, János’ brother
- Borcsa:** Hungarian name: Czikkai Borcsa [maiden name] married names: Adler Borcsa, Adler Borbála, Adler Rezsőné, American name: Barbara Adler known as “Anyu” (diminutive of mother) János’ mother.
- Rezső Adler:** Hungarian name: Adler Rezső Abraham, in English context sometimes referred to as Rudolph, father to Janos and Denis and husband of Borcsa known as “Apu”
- Mamika:** Hungarian names: Czikkai Rosa (Regina) née Czinner. Mother of Borcsa Adler née Czikkai. Grandmother of Janos Adler.
- Aunt Gundi:** Czinner Kunigund Glükelt née Deutsch (1840-?) married to Emanuel (Menachea, Mór, Menachem, Mano) Czinner (1819-1884) Mother of Regina (Mamika), grandmother of Borcsa and great grandmother of János Adler,
- János Czikkai/Czinner:** Hungarian name: Czikkai János
- Sándor Czinner:** Hungarian name: Czinner Sándor later Csanyi Sándor, brother of Czinner Regina, Janos’ grandmother
- Mariska Csanyi:** Hungarian name: Csanyi Mariska née Czukor, Csanyi Sándorné
- Emma Steiner:** née Czinner [Csanyi]: Hungarian name: Steiner Emma, sister of János’ grandmother Mamika
- Matyas Czikkai:** Hungarian name: Czikkai Mátyás
- Paulina** Leontine Wilhelm née Czinner: Hungarian name: Wilhelm Paulina, married name: Wilhelm Adolfné, sister of Janos’ grandmother Mamika
- Adolf Wilhelm:** Hungarian name: Wilhelm Adolf, husband of Paulina, brother-in-law of Janos’ grandmother Mamika
- János Wilhelm:** Hungarian name: Wilhelm János changed to Vadász János in 1896, son of Adolf and Paulina Wilhelm, cousin of Borcsa Adler, established Zinner (later Pick Salami)
- Mihaly Marberger:** Hungarian name: Marberger Mihaly, married to Rózsa née Czikkai, the sister of Borcsa, the mother of János.
- Mátyás Czinner:** Hungarian name: Czinner Mátyás changed name to Csanyi Mátyás, cousin of Borcsa Adler,
- Berta:** Éva’s mother, Janos mother-in-law- Hungarian names: Hoffer Berta [maiden name], married names Timár Berta and Timár Dezsőné later Neumann Berta and Neumann Gyuláné, alternative spelling: Bertha in America: Bertha Neumann
- Gyula, Julius:** Éva’s stepfather: Hungarian name: Neumann Gyulá, American name: Julius Neumann
- Lisa:** Éva’s elder sister: Hungarian names: Timár Lisa [maiden name], married names: Földes Lisa, American name: Elizabeth Foldes called Lisa
- Pat:** Éva’s sister-in-law, Patricia Rae Valentine [maiden name] married name: Patricia Rae Adler (later Patricia Ingram, Patricia Adler Ingram Ph.D) known as “Pat” became very close friends with Éva.

TIMELINE: JÁNOS [JOHN] ADLER

- 1905 Born on October 22, 1905 - Szeged, Hungary
- 1911 János starts at the Jewish school
- 1914 János' father Rezső mobilised and sent to the front in Kamenica, Hercegovina.
- 1915 János starts studying at the Szeged school run by the Piarist order
- 1916 Rezső wounded in Transylvania and returns to Szeged to recuperate
- 1917-1918 János spent the summers with his family in Strehaia
- 1919 Bar Mitzvah
- 1923 -1927 Studies at Hochschule für Welthandel [International Business School] Vienna, Austria
- 1937 Married to Éva Timár.
Honeymoon first at Palota Szálloda Lillafüred in the mountains of Hungary and then a week in Italy.
- 1937-1939 Residence: Hajnóczy Utca. #10 Szeged, Hungary
- 1939 Death of his father Rezső Ábrahám Adler on April 17, 1939 - Szeged, Hungary
- 1941-1945 At the age of 36, enlisted into Forced Labor battalion [Militär Arbeitsdienst] stationed in Kunszentmiklós, Hungary. Wounded on the eastern front, he became patient at a military hospital. Captured by the Soviet army and moved to Hospital Alekszejovka-Nikolajevka. János was reported missing in unknown circumstances on the 17th of January 1943 and again in October 1943. [Labour battalion source: Nevek Project] Soviet prisoner of war in camp nr. 188 Tambovskaja Lager from January 1943 til August 1945. Repatriated to Szeged arriving on August 20, 1945.
- 1945 - 1948 Residence Hajnóczy Utca. #10 Szeged, Hungary
- 1946 Surname changed on April 9, 1946 to Arató and back to Adler in 1948
- 1947 Employed by the Hungarian Provision Transporting and Commercial Company LTD. as assistant manager of the A. Stéberl Co. (Manufacturers of Sausages and Hungarian Salami in Gyula) July 1947- February 1948
- 1948 Emigration from Hungary on February 22, 1948, aged 43
- 1949 Residence: 258A Lasky Drive, Beverly Hills, California
- 1950 Residence: 104801 Eastbourne Ave, West Los Angeles, California
- 1950 Hired as an accountant Capital Brush Company- [<http://www.fuller.com/our-story/>] Los Angeles, California where he worked till retirement He worked his way up to the position of vice-president of the company.
- 1952 Residence: 8734 Wonderland Ave., Los Angeles, California
- 1953 Naturalization: János becomes a citizen of the United States on October 12
- 1961 Residence: 7669 Woodrow Wilson Dr., Los Angeles, 90046
- 1975 Death of his mother Barbara Adler on September 15, 1975 in Los Angeles
- 1994 Death July 28, 1994 - Los Angeles, California, USA. According to his wishes, his body was cremated and his ashes "fed to the fishes".



Great great grandmother



Great grandmother Kunigund Czinner

Establishing a Jewish Community in Szeged

I want to talk about the origins of my family; actually, I don't really know anything about the family before they came to Szeged, so that is when the story starts.

I have to look at the picture of my great great grandmother hanging in my living room, a very dainty, distinguished looking old lady; that helps me to recreate the time when the first Jews moved from *Kiskundorozsma*, a village about 8 miles from Szeged, to live the city.¹ That must have happened in the 1780's when emperor Josef II decreed, that the Jews in Hungary were allowed to settle in towns and assume regular names.²

When I look at the painting of my great-great-grandmother, memories of her stories and of books I have read come back to me. I imagine that some time around the 1760's a young Jew wearing the usual prescribed garb, approached the Szeged town gate, with items of his trade on his back, because at 6 o'clock the Jewish peddlers had to leave the town and to make the return trip to *Kiskundrusma*, to his home, his wife and his son. He would count his blessings that today he had gotten away with just giving the usual tip to the guard on duty at the gate. Sometime he met another guard who was rougher and with whom he had had some very unpleasant experiences.

It seems like a long long time ago, but when I think about history in generations, it is not really that long ago. My great-great-grandmother probably could remember this young Jew or his son. Perhaps he was her grandfather. It has only been a few generations since the provincial Jewry around Szeged could start to live a life that was up to generally accepted human standards. I felt like throwing that in, because it that was really amazing and it could be ascribed to the fact that Szeged was basically a peasant community and by nature the Hungarian peasant was a conservative democrat. He lived with the Jews because the Jews were his bankers, doctors, and lawyers and he felt that he got a fairly decent treatment. This was why the relationship between the Szeged Jewry and the gentile population was happy and seemed solid.³

Under the everlasting benign reign of Kaiser & King Franz Joseph the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was shining in old glory.

FAMILY NAMES

Traditionally Jews were known only by their Jewish names; the son of so-and-so and there was no way to identify them, which of course was not a big help for the imperial tax collectors.⁴ I heard from my mother and my grandmother, that there were four Jewish families that originally moved into Szeged; among them were the Schweigers⁵ and the Zinners.⁶ My family, the Zinners, settled near the first synagogue where they were allowed to build a house in a little neighborhood.

One by one, Jewish families dropped the German names they had been given by imperial functionaries and assumed Hungarian names. The Zinner family, one branch of my mother's family, chose the name of Cziklai and the other branch took Csanyi. I assume the change of names happened after the so-called official emancipation of the Hungarian Jewry in 1879. It was around 1880, the time when my grandfather, his wife and her brothers were alive.



*János Czikkai/Czinner, Jancsi's grandfather
(1852-1893)*



*János Czikkai/Czinner married Rosa Czinner
("Mamika")
on January 30, 1876*

MY GRANDPARENTS

Now, Szeged at that time was a peasant community. The early Jewish settlers were received in a friendly way by the basically simple, unsophisticated peasant-type gentile population and this atmosphere continued way into the beginning of the 20th century. This contributed to the assimilation of the Szeged Jewry in possibly the most perfect way in Hungary.

In my grandfather's time the Czinner family was fully integrated into the Szeged life. By that time parts of the family were known as Czikkai and others as Czinner.

My grandfather taught mathematics in a secondary school, and was hired by the Szeged Csongrad Savings and Loan Association to set up a double-entry bookkeeping system for the company.⁷ He eventually became Director of the Bank. He was a very well-educated and literate man, and became a master of the Szeged Chapter of the Free Masons. Unfortunately, he died early and left my grandmother to take care of three daughters and one son.

After the death of her husband, my grandmother started a business renting canvas sacks to peasants, to use for the harvest.⁸ My grandmother was advised by her younger brother, himself a very successful wool merchant.⁹ The administration of the sack rental business was minimal and perhaps therefore very successful. I remember seeing peasants coming into the storage room in the basement to rent many bags and tarpaulins. With each transaction, an entry was made with a pencil in the ledger with the name of the peasant and the number of the sacks and the tarpaulins they took. The name was crossed out when the sacks were returned after the harvest and that was the whole accounting, but the business was very successful.

My grandmother became a very well-to-do person, and could give her children a very good education. Her only son Mátyás, was the apple of her eye.¹⁰ He became, in due course, one of the employees of the Szeged Csongrad Savings and Loan Association, where she was one of the major stockholders.

My grandmother had two sisters and two brothers. One sister I didn't even know much about, I remember as a simple old retired lady.¹¹ The other one, aunt Paulina was a very vivacious woman who adored good living.¹² She married an officer in the Hungarian army, which of course couldn't provide for the style of life she loved, so he had to retire from the army and assume a position as postmaster.¹³

The two sons in due course became respected lawyers in our city. Uncle János, the eldest, had the most remarkable career.¹⁴ He established a Salami factory called Zinner Salami. That was later the basis of the famous Pick Salami, which was known throughout Europe. After he sold his salami business to the Pick family he went into banking. In due course, he became Director General of one the big banks in Szeged. He was appointed Royal Councilor under Francis Josef.¹⁵

Sándor, the brother closest to my grandmother, was a very successful wool merchant. He, too, became Director of the Szeged Csongradi Savings and Loan and gave his son Mátyás a top-notch education.¹⁶ Mátyás also became a lawyer and took over the business after the death of his father. He and his mother found a tragic end in the 1930's, when a crazy fellow, believing that these were very rich people holding a lot of gold in their house, broke in one night and beat them to death.



*Sándor Czinner (Csanyi) with Mátyás Csanyi (Child)
and Mariska Csanyi née Czukor*

ASSIMILATION AND AND JEWISH CULTURE

Religion basically played only a secondary role in the Jewish community in Szeged around the turn of the century. The forms were kept very strictly and seriously, but not many went regularly to the synagogue. And few attended the Jewish religious schooling system. The Szeged Jewry had become happily assimilated in the mainstream of the Hungarian life and tended to forget about roots, and identify primarily as Hungarian, preferably a chauvinistic Hungarian. But during the big holidays, religion really played an important role and everybody observed the rituals (more or less) and went to the temple.

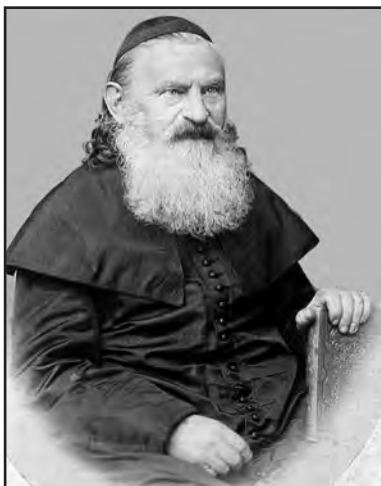
Hebrew was taught only to the kids in the Jewish elementary school. There were four classes. The teachers, the rabbis, were also primarily Hungarians, and secondly Jews. The teaching was really pretty superficial. It consisted more of memorizing certain things than digging into the meaning of those verses and sentences that had to be learned by heart.

Of course, as I said the framework and appearances were kept up diligently, and as a matter of fact, the Szeged Jewry had two outstanding rabbis. During the second half of the 19th century, Leopold Lőw was chief rabbi.¹⁷ He would wear garments and boots like a Hungarian nobleman; very patrician looking. He was very respected by the whole community.¹⁸

His son Immánuel, who followed him as the chief rabbi of Szeged, was a world renowned botanist specializing in the Jewish religious botany.¹⁹

Rabbi Immánuel Lőw was a cultivator of very refined Hungarian language. He created his own terminology, so his eloquent sermons in Hungarian were attended by a lot of gentiles from the city. His sermons were something unusual and very attractive. Being a very charismatic man of very aristocratic appearance, he could mobilize both people and means.²⁰

Rabbi Immánuel Lőw set it as his goal to build a synagogue that would be something extraordinary and become world famous. He certainly succeeded in that. The synagogue is still standing. It is a reminder of the powerful Szeged Jewry of about 5000 heads. Unfortunately, 4,000 names are engraved in the marble slabs on the side of the synagogue, commemorating the about 80% of the population that was exterminated by the holocaust.



Rabbi Leopold Lőw



*Rabbi, scholar and politician
Immánuel Lőw*



The Synagogue in Szeged ©Adler 2016

THE NEXT GENERATION

Now, after this introduction, and after I superficially talked about my grandmother, I must move on to tell about to the next generation, namely my mother.²¹

This is the story of how she met my father and married, because in the arch-conservative community in which my ancestors lived, my mother's story was a very unusual one. [In our community] marriages were usually between families from the Jewish community in the city. Marriage to an outsider from a neighboring town was rare.

My mother met a man named Rezső Adler who was working for one of the branches the leading grain houses of the Hungary.²² It just happened that it was love at first sight, but mother met a tremendous resistance from her family. They refused to give their blessing to the marriage.

My mother told me about one incident: one day aunty Mariska, the wife of uncle Sándor, who was the strongest opponent of the marriage, took Borasca over to their house across the street.²³

She told Borcsa (my mother) to get up onto the bed next to her and preached to her for hours about the horrible dangers she might run into if she married Rezső. Mother told me: "I listened, I listened, and finally I got tired of it and fell asleep. But I certainly did not change my mind at all, because I was in love with your father and I was set on marrying him."

Rezső Adler had no connections in Szeged. But he was a very good-looking gentleman, an officer in the reserve, and a very respected person. So, it was very difficult to find any real objections against him. Everyone tried to talk my mother out of getting married to Rezső, who was known to be not unfriendly to the weaker sex.

Eventually she won, and in 1904 they got married. In due course I came, as the first son, in 1906. It was really the most beautiful thing, because the marriage turned out to be just wonderful. I have the fondest memories of the relationship, which I saw developing between them and the happy atmosphere that radiated from them all the time.

Well, for the time being everything was just fine. In 1904, Rezső and his bride Borcsa rented a comfortable apartment in the *Regdon ház*.²⁴ From the apartment we could look down haughtily on the decaying house opposite that belonged to the malicious old witch Julcsa Toth (who cast an evil spell). Decades later it was bought and modernized by Éva's step-father, Julius Neumann.



Rezső Adler
b.1874 - d.1939



Borcsa Czikkai
b.1885 - d.1975



*Rezső Abraham Adler married Borcsa Cziklai
Wedding photograph, 1904*

EARLY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

I must have had some foreboding of trouble to come! As a harbinger of ill tidings, Dr. Kohegyi, our family doctor, had to grab my head with forceps to persuade me to reluctantly enter the outer world. Legend says that my limp left eyelid is the memento of that operation.

I have no memories of my baby sister Magda who died when she was only 3 months old, nor of my brother Béla who was subdued by a combination of scarlet fever and diphtheria when 4 years old.²⁵

But my mother told me that in a sudden show of affection I had stuffed my cherished *soskifli* pastry into the mouth of my baby brother Dini and nearly choked him to death.²⁶ That was quite an expression of brotherly love; because apart from breakfast and luncheon, I survived on *soskifli*. I refused to eat anything but Swiss cheese and salami for dinner. I would personally pick up salami every day at Schlesinger Mór



*Mother Borcsa Adler (1885-1975), János Adler (1905-1994)
brother Béla Adler (1909-1912), father Rezső Adler (1874-1939)*



János circa 1908



János circa 1909



Belá Adler, 1911, Szeged

*es fia*²⁷ under the benign smile of Aunt Szász, the darling mother of Mátyás. My mother went along with this extravaganza only because at that time, I was so thin that some people thought I was rachitic.²⁸

Sometimes my mother told me to run down to the corner and pick up something at the grocery of old Adolf Roth. She got outraged when I bought candy of the most questionable quality for myself. She went back down with me and reproached Uncle Roth very sternly. He answered her: “Madam, I do not influence my customers.”

“EIN GENERAL SPRACH MICH AN!”

My first memory? That is a good question and I have to laugh, when I think about it. How strongly our thinking was influenced by the romanticized militarism, and how the army enjoyed a very respected status in the aura of Emperor Franz Josef.

Father had a deep respect for the German language and he spoke *Hochdeutsch* beautifully.²⁹ When it came time to take a *Deutsches Fräulein*³⁰ für mich, he said: “Well, the people aus Böhmen, they speak beautiful *Hochdeutsch*.³¹ So, we have to get a teacher from there.” In due course *Fräulein* von Neunstein came to be my teacher. *Fräulein* von Neunstein played a very important role in my life from the time I was four or five years old. She spoke a beautiful classic German. So, it was under the guidance of my Austrian *Fräulein* that I made my *Spaziergang* in Szeged.³²

I had gotten a complete army uniform: overcoat, belt, boots, and military cap, all after army regulations. In the belt I had a little bayonet, which was my most treasured property.



János in complete army uniform



Rezső Adler in uniform and mounted



Austrian Fräulein from Neunstein with János

One day I was parading down our street, *Korona Utca*, mit *Fraulein* and suddenly a brigadier general appeared. At that time, I was already very much aware of rank and I knew immediately who was approaching. He came towards me and stopped to express his satisfaction that my uniform met regulations. I looked up at the great man and he said: "Hello little soldier, how are you doing?" and he asked me about my uniform, bayonet, and belt. He was smiling and seemed very happy. Then he saluted me, I saluted back and he left. I felt tremendously proud. I went home and I told my mother in my most beautiful *Hochdeutsch*: 'Mother, *ein General sprach mich an.*' I remember saying this to her: 'Ein General sprach mich an.' It may sound very stupid, but that is the earliest memory from my childhood.³³

It should be understood that the guns of August [1914] destroyed the particular way of life and the social fabric of the middle and upper classes that had prevailed in Hungary for more than half a century. Before then more than two generations had grown up without even smelling gunpowder. Now an exuberantly pride and martial spirit was evolving. There were officers and gentlemen all over, even in my family; my father was a lieutenant of the reserve and looked very smart in his gala uniform.

I remember another time that I excitedly told my mother while we were sitting on a bench in the Stefania park, that Herr Vamos, the *plagegeist*, gave me his bayonet to play with.³⁴ He thought that while I was running around playing with the bayonet, he could flirt with my *Fräulein*. My mother was *not* amused.



Grandmother's house, Korona Utca 9 - Photograph from 1982 ©B. Adler

MY GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE

My grandmother was an angel. She spoiled me very much because I was the preferred grandson. I stayed with her in her house for overnights until my graduation year. I was kind of commuting between the two houses: from my grandmother's house across the street to our house, where we had a very comfortable apartment.

The ground floor of my grandmother's house was occupied by the spacious storage place of her very prosperous burlap bag and tarpaulin business. It was mainly a leasing operation.

I spent all my free time down there and I had lots of fun with the four Tombatz girls who worked as seamstresses. They mended the damaged burlaps using big Singer sewing machines. Mamika's office consisted of one desk, with one girl. Mamika purchased everything with cash. I remember vividly the big ledger that was the backbone of the operation. The peasants would come with their horse carts and load as many bags and tarps as they needed. Their names, the dates and number of sacks were properly entered in pencil into the ledger. When the customer came back, duly delivered the rentals, and paid cash, the original entry was simply crossed out. Period. That was the foundation of the fortune that made Mamika one of the biggest stockholders of the Szeged Csongradi Bank.

Our corridor looked down on the spacious courtyard separating the old and new edifices with the big double branched white and black blue berry tree and the massive double doors of the immense, vaulted basement with its coal, wood, potatoes, and wine sections. It was an excellent place to play *rablo zsander* with my pals.³⁵



Grandmother Mamika's house and business office (under renovation in 1982) ©Adler



Rozsa Cziklai known as Mamika, mother of Borcsa Adler and grandmother of János

I don't remember when I started the bed-and-breakfast deal of coffee and scrambled eggs in bed, with Mamika; but I know that it lasted until around 1928 when we moved across the street to Korona u.10.³⁶ Mamika had twin beds in her bedroom and I was very happy to be her bedroom partner.

After breakfast Mamika strode out to the antechamber to meet the "combing lady" who began the daily ritual that consisted of two parts. Firstly, my grandmother's impressive high hairdo was done with skillful use of the *einlage*³⁷ while all the fresh gossip that the "combing lady" shlepped from house to house, was relayed and she gathered up further information about my family.

The *einlage* had another important function. Properly scared by the wild stories I heard from the household personnel around me, I was a pretty timid little boy. I had nightmares at night and not only crept up close to Mamika, but in order to fall asleep feeling strong and confident I had to have one hand on her coiffure. In her quest for her own comfort, she had the bright idea of pushing the *einlage* into the hand of her half-asleep grandchild. This worked out to the satisfaction of both parties involved.

SLAUGHTERING THE PIG

We never went anywhere near the *Schächter*.³⁸ NEVER. We killed our own chickens at home. Around Christmas time, uncle Sándor sent us a Christmas hog from Puszta Doc, the big estate where he resided and which he rented from Markgraf [marquis] Johann von Pallavicini, who was one of the big landowners in our neighbourhood.³⁹ So, at Christmas time, a 250 kilo pig was delivered to Mamika's house.

Every Christmas, the big doors in Mamika's house were unhinged, whitewashed and set up as an operational and funeral table for the advent of the hog. Our trusted butcher served as funeral director. The orgy of hyper cholesterol goodies went on from early morning until the evening: cold cuts, sausages, and hams prepared to be taken to the smokehouse by the slightly intoxicated butcher. Large containers of pork fat were taken to the larder. The last ham was boiled for hours together with innumerable eggs that somehow assumed the taste of the ham; these were reserved

for Easter. All this schweinerei went on with the chief rabbi of Szeged living on the opposite side of the street. No one cared. It was still the *laissez faire - laissez passer* [attitude to life], the unadulterated spirit of 19th century!⁴⁰

It reminds me of the milkman from 'Fiddler on the roof': *TRADITION*. We respected the tradition, we honored it and we kept it going but, it had nothing to do with our everyday life, which was an entirely gentitized way of life.

BOURGEOIS FAMILY LIFE

If you were standing in our corridor and raised your eyes from the basement entrance you could look into the big windowed closed patio that stretched from one end of the building to the other.

The center part served as lunchroom during the spring, summer, and autumn. There were glass doors separating the covered patio from the bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. Uncle Sándor, Mariska and Mátyás would come for a meal around 11 in the morning at least once a week.⁴¹ My mother's sisters would also come with their spouses and offspring.⁴²

Mamika sat at the head of the table and the 3-course meal always started with soup. At least once a week Főzelék was served. Mamika dipped her spoon in the liquid, tasted it and announced: "Fine soup!"⁴³ Rezső's [my father's] stereotype answer was: "Yes, Mamika, it is wet and warm". These episodes come to mind and should serve to give at least a vague idea of the life of solid bourgeois values, which started to crumble at the bark of the guns of August 1914 and finally collapsed in 1918.

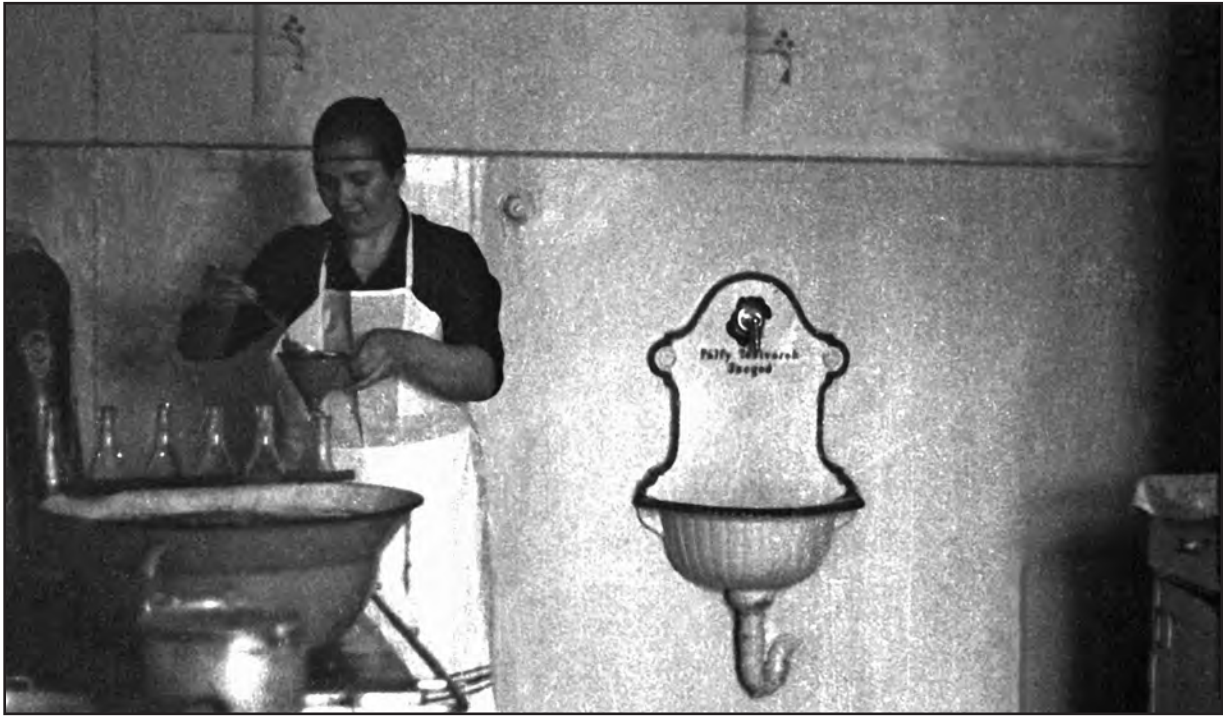
Around that time, the company my father had together with Nandor Eisenberger *es tarsa* changed name to Rezső Adler.⁴⁴ Earlier my father had gone into partnership with Nandor Eisenberger, the doyen of Szeged's grain merchants.⁴⁵ His home and office were both on the first floor of the building known as *Regdon ház*, one of the most elegant high rise (3 story) buildings in town. Father didn't like to go there, because Mrs. Einsenberger, a very meticulous lady always admonished him to wipe his shoes properly before entering her sanctum.⁴⁶

When Mr. Eisenberger retired, the firm moved into the newly built 2nd floor apartment in Mamika's house at Korona Street nr. 9.

My father's office was in one big room flanked on one side with the entrance hall and W.C., on the other, by the kitchen, larder, and servant's room. It served a threefold purpose: during office hours, it was the headquarters of the firm; at noon, a lunchroom; and at night it became the bedroom of the German *Fräulein*. The office personnel consisted of two people: Izso, the bookkeeper and Sarika, the secretary - both of them were my great friends.

When I was about six years old Izso took me, strictly confidential, into the W.C., unbuttoned his trousers and illustrated in *natura* the act of masturbation spiced with proper explanation. He told me that when I was old enough to be able to get a hard-on, I would be able to experience a lot of pleasure. I was duly impressed.

Besides the extended family, our household consisted of a cook, a *Stubenmädél* (maid), and my *Fräulein*. Well, it was a very solid Hungarian, provincial middleclass life, with heavy accent on good eating; literature and music were also important.



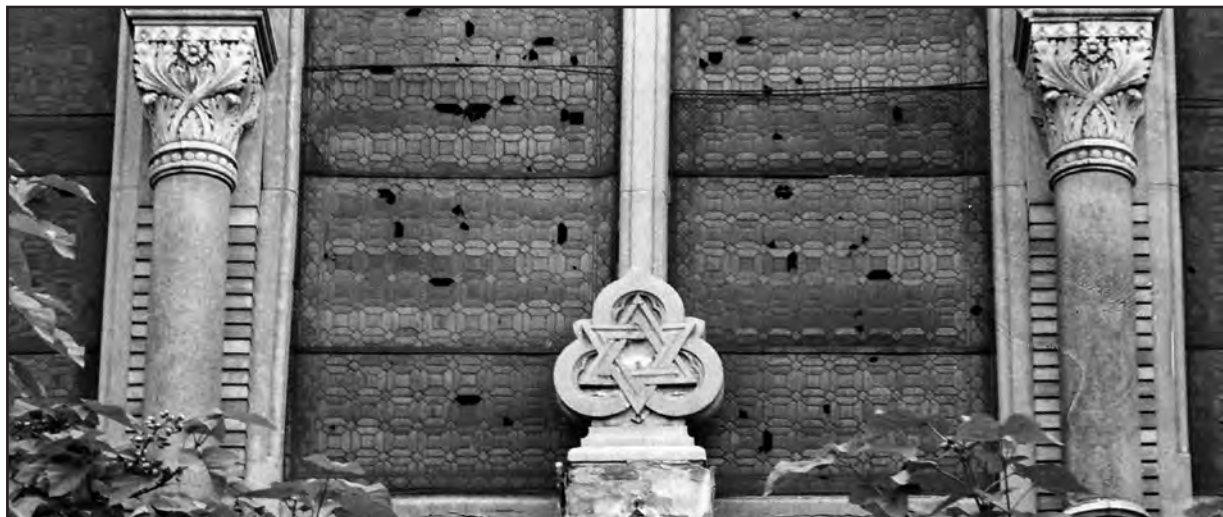
Cook © Lisa Timár Szeged 1935

JEWISH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

I went to the Jewish elementary school. It was normal for a Jewish boy, to go to the Jewish elementary school and it was the best school in town. Even some prominent liberal-minded gentile families sent their children to the Jewish elementary school.⁴⁷

The four classes of the Jewish elementary school education consisted of good, solid teaching of the Hungarian language. They were also very strict about mathematics and geography. Jewish subjects were very marginal and consisted mainly of memorizing word-for-word certain religious ceremonies translated from Hebrew into Hungarian.

My years there passed without particular excitement. I was an exemplary student and the teacher, Izidor Lowinger, loved me. He taught me good spelling, good arithmetic and a lot Hebrew texts from the *Meló Chofnájim és Mivchor*.⁴⁸ The Jewish teaching was pretty superficial and learning was mechanical. We had to learn it by



Detail of the old Synagogue, built in 1843 in neoclassical style ©Adler 1982

heart, without knowing what we were rattling off. Emphasis was laid on being good Hungarian patriots in the spirit of the great rabbis Lőw. Absolutely nothing was done to instill any Jewishness into the boys and girls. We were educated to become good Hungarians. After the first four years in the Jewish elementary school I knew the Hebrew alphabet and I could read Hebrew without having the faintest idea of what I was reading. And of course, even that faded away.

There was a friendly spirit between the boys, my schoolmates in the elementary school, but no real friendship grew out of it. Every day I went home directly after school.

So, my life was within the family circle. At home I received an extracurricular education; private tutoring in German language and in music. Mother supervised my homework assignments; first, through elementary school, then secondary school. I was given enough pocket money and encouraged to visit the local antiquarian to buy books and to read them. Of course, the earliest book I remember was Karl May.⁴⁹

The Jewish elementary school basically taught us to read and write. We had a good knowledge of arithmetic, some geography, a little Hungarian history, and this very minimal Hebrew education.



János 13 years old at the photo studio with his Karl May book



Rezső Adler with friend László Tausig in gala uniform



*from left: Janos' uncle, Mihaly Marberger (brother-in-law to Rezső Adler),
Maljók, Rezső Adler, Repény Holzer
At the beginning of the First World War in Kamenica, Hercegovina.*

World War I: Father's War

My father had to report for active military posting during the first mobilization in 1914. My uncle Mátyás Cziklai was ensign in the Infantry and my uncle Mihaly Marberger, a lieutenant in the artillery, were called up as well.

My father's firm fell dormant until 1938. So, my mother was always trying to economize to make ends meet on the officer's pay that my father dutifully sent home to her.

During the first months, father's battalion was stationed peacefully in Kamenica, Hercegovina. We visited him there during the summer of 1915.⁵⁰ From there his battalion was transferred to the Romanian front under the command of Major Gyurka whom I looked upon as a *homo regius*. Father was promoted to 1st lieutenant and became his adjutant.

ROMANIA/TRANSYLVANIA

While in Transylvania, in Romania, the battalion of reservists had gotten orders to take the mountain. The Romanians were up on the mountain shooting down at them, which was very unfortunate.⁵¹ And because the Romanians were shooting downwards at them, they had to run upwards and try to take the hill position. So, there was no enthusiasm whatsoever to run and storm the mountain. The major in charge of the company was an old professional officer; my father was the company adjutant. The major ordered: "Adler get them going, get your revolver and get them going." So father got his revolver and "got them going." The trench had a 10 meter gap he had to run through to administer the exhortation of the recalcitrants.

That is when he got shot through the collarbone bone; in and out.

The captain surgeon, who examined and treated him delivered the diagnosis: "Mr. First Lieutenant, this wound is worth 50,000 crowns and no more service on the front." It was the happiest event of the war!

RECUPERATION AND A NEW POSITION

But let's go back to 1916-17. My father was happily recuperating from his wound in Szeged, got his purple heart⁵² and was considered for promotion to the rank of captain, when the hospital commandant told him that there was a requisition from the German Military Administration in occupied Romania for grain experts.⁵³ Would he be interested? He answered "YES" without any hesitation. So, for the two years (until the collapse of the Central Powers in 1918) he was in Romania.



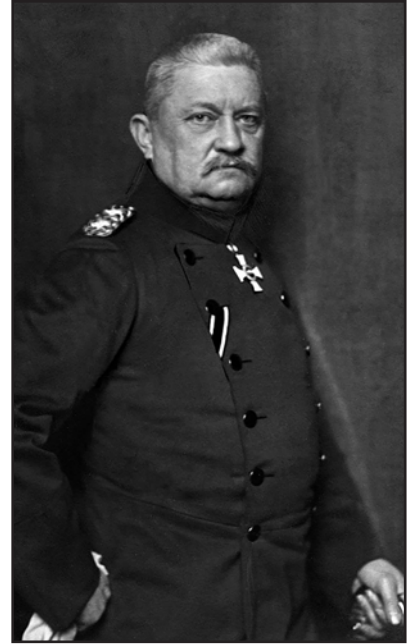
Hungarian soldiers on the front 1917 ©Fortepan-5706 Móravecz János



Rezső was promoted to 1st lieutenant in Kamenica



Rezső was wounded in Romania, recuperating in Szeged in 1916



*Lt. Col. Baron von Marschall
1915
wikimedia.org*

We spent two summer vacations in Strehaia, close to Turnu Severin⁵⁴ where my father was the only Austro Hungarian officer under the supreme command of Lt. Col. Baron von Marschall, an archetype of a Prussian Junker⁵⁵ who presided over a Squadron of Prussian Lancers and a company of Saxon infantry.

Father's job was to purchase grain for the troops and he was pretty popular with the Germans. His record for collecting grain was the best in the whole exploitive organization for the simple reason that Apu paid one *lei* more than the official price per unit. He assumed correctly that the paper money the Germans printed en masse was no good anyway.



National Archives at College Park - Archives II - <https://commons.wikimedia.org>



Romania perhaps 1917 - Rezső seated on right

1917 KAISER WILHELM II COMES TO THE FRONT

It was indicated that the train [of Kaiser Wilhelm II] would stop in Strehaia and the Kaiser would step out and make a short inspection before continuing his trip.⁵⁶ Marschall organized the whole thing. Now, Marschall, the old Junker, knew the Kaiser and he lined the ten German officers up in front of the station. He was at the head of the group: then the major, several captains, a few lieutenants and so on, and at the end of the line was the Österreichisch-ungarischer Offizier, captain Adler.

So the Kaiser stepped down, and was greeted cordially by his old friend Baron von Marschall. The Kaiser then went down the line; he shook hands with each officer and when he arrived in front of Father, he acted as if Father was air. He just didn't see him. He continued to walk back to the train. And that was the end of the story. Father was tremendously offended; he was there, his *Auszeichnungen* and everything. He was pretty well decorated, he was *verwundet*, and he had about five or six *Auszeichnungen*. I know Marschall submitted him for the *Eiserne Kreuz zweiter Klasse*.⁵⁷ Father was very well regarded for his performance as *Getreidekollektor*, procurement officer, because he had a very simple device. He knew that the Romanian *Lei* was printed *en masse* in Bukarest. So when a price was fixed for wheat, for this or that, father just raised the price. What the heck! And the result was tremendous, the Romanians came and Father overperformed. He overproduced and that was his credit. That is why Marschall submitted him for an *Auszeichnung*, which he never got. But anyway, father was mortally offended.

I was in 7th heaven in Strehaia. Father had a big Benz automobile and 2 horsedrawn carriages at his disposal. I paraded along beside him brandishing his service revolver while he made his inspection tours.

An elegant, tall, blonde lance officer, Lt. von Bredow took a liking to me and assigned a sergeant to teach me horseback riding. He would also take me on outings.⁵⁸ Once, when he returned from furlough he returned with an impressive camera for me, everything was sheer delight.

That was the time my little brother, Dini, made his presence known.⁵⁹ I remember he was a very little boy and that he picked up a gargantuan diarrhea, which affected all of us in different ways.

MISSING IN ACTION IN GALICIA

My uncle, Mátyás was unlucky. He went missing in action somewhere in Galicia on the Russian Front.⁶⁰ Mátyás was a very soft, tender and reclusive person, a real Mama's boy. He was spoiled and safeguarded by overwhelming love. Being a principal stockholder of the Szeged Csongradi bank she got him a bank clerk's job.

My main link to him was our weekly pilgrimage to Paral's butcher shop, the best in Szeged at that time, where they carried the imported Prague-style smoked Czech ham and where the choice customers had a chance to sample the ham bones, full with the tastiest segments of ham. Mátyás would carefully choose one, which was properly wrapped and we trudged home with the bounty. We would sit at the table on the veranda, he would unfold the wrapping, spread it out, pull out his long, pearl-handled pocket knife and cut one bite for me and one bite for himself, and he continued doing so until our bellies were full.

Poor Mátyás, *requiescas in pace*.⁶¹

Mamika spent a fortune to try to trace him down, to no avail. She was told that he suffered a stomach shot and died in a peasant hut. Mamika never recovered from this blow.



Rezső Adler, Romania, 1917



Anatol Graf von Bredow
<http://gmick.co.uk/>



Mátyás Czislai was
ensign in the Infantry



Rezső Adler after World War I



Miss Edith Sherman Thomas

Our family certainly paid its dues: *ad vitam* and *sanguinem pro patria nostra*.⁶² It took less than three decades for the patria to honor our sacrifices with bloody murder.

“THE PROBLEM WITH THE GERMANS”

I remember a time my father came home on furlow. It must have been a few months before the end of the war: the collapse. I stood there with my mother waiting. I was about 12 years old. My father came up to us and said something like: “You know there is some problem with the Germans. They are just overbearing. This is *Erster Weltkrieg*. They are haughty! They are just too arrogant! If they win this war, there will be a lot of trouble. And this kid starts to learn English right now!!!” He pointed at me.

That was his vision of the future. My father had a good intuition, and he was a smart guy. So he took me down to Miss Edith Sherman Thomas, the only English teacher in Szeged. This was at the time of the First World War; it was still a time of *Ritterlichkeit*. There was no *internierung* [imprisonment of enemy aliens] and so, Miss Thomas could continue to live and teach in Szeged. She took me on and I started to learn English. I fell in love with it, and that came in very handy later German being my first foreign language, English became the second and I really loved it.

Youth

After the War, a retired Autro-Hungarian navy officer, Captain Gurusa, came to reside in Szeged. He became a University lecturer and taught English. I took lessons with him, walking. Just *Spaziergang* and English conversation; just to practice my English and keep it polished. I always read a lot ... you know the Tauchnitz editions at that time were tremendously popular and a lot of good books came out.⁶³ I read English all the time.

Then when I went to the *Hochschule für Welthandel* [in Vienna], where I took English as my first foreign language and during my second year I took French, which I never liked, but I adored English. I had a very good English teacher Dr. Brunner, from Innsbruck. I learned an Austrian type of English from him. So English stayed with me and I continued to practice. And after German it became my third language.



János and his younger brother Denes

BAR MITZVAH

For the preparations for my Bar Mitzvah I went to the office of Schwartz; a man of many occupations. He was the third cantor of the Szeged Jewish Community. There was the chief cantor, the second cantor, and then number three cantor was Schwarz. He was also the local *Schächter* and performed the ritual slaughtering of chickens and geese. Because that is how they are supposed to be treated. The servants, because they were gentile people, were not supposed to touch them.



János doing homework from the Jewish elementary school, Szeged - December 28, 1918

So anyway, Schwarz' office for religious education indoctrinated my whole generation with the *Bar Mitzvah* studies. The education was transacted in his *Schächter* office where he performed all his duties. He taught me the rigmarole of the particular chapter that had to be read with a singsong voice on the day when I was *Bar Mitzvah*. We had to learn and recite the different songs and prayers properly and, in between, people would come in with chickens and Schwarz performed the necessary function. So, it was a combination of cutting the necks of chickens and (laugh) teaching us the rituals. In retrospect, it was a very funny thing, but that is the way it was. I started studying about half a year before my *Bar Mitzvah* and I went through a lot of studying. A *lot* of studying!

I learned it, and I performed it beautifully, and that was it.



Entrance to the school & old synagogue ©B. Adler 1982

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

After four years [at the Jewish School], a decision had to be made as to where I should continue my schooling. The only kids who chose to go to the so-called *Realschule* were those who wanted to focus on mathematics or physics before going to the Technical High School and becoming engineers.

But the only *real* choice for a Jewish boy of good family was the high school of the Piarist Fathers - the *Klauzál Gábor Reálgimnázium*.⁶⁴ The biggest event in shaping my character with humanistic colorations, as well as in forming my spiritual profile, came in 1914 with my stepping through the massive portal of the Reálgimnázium of the Piarist fathers, the leading educational institution of Szeged. The Piarist Gimnázium was a very strict Roman Catholic school with an excellent reputation. I was very lucky indeed, because the first four years were touched neither by the turmoil of the red terror of 1918 nor the white terror of 1919.⁶⁵ The whole social, political, economical system was rudely shaken up and the waves of extreme emotions did not leave the student body and the faculty unaffected.

During our secondary education we had to go to the Jewish elementary school for one hour of religion class; in retrospect it was entirely meaningless. It did not mean anything to us, *nothing* transpired; we just went through a routine that nobody cared about very much, neither the teachers nor the boys.

At the *Gimnázium* I got new teachers and I was very lucky; I had a professor for Latin and Hungarian, Professor Balangny, who later became prior of the order. He was a very charismatic man who taught children beautifully. He was also my teacher of zoology.



*Dugonics András Piarista Gimnázium class of 1922/1923
János left side, 3rd row from top, middle*

Later my mathematics professor became my top favorite. I respected him for being a real character former; who on the one side kept a distance, he did not warm up to the boys, while on the other hand he taught them to be straightforward. There was nothing he hated more than a lie. If he found out somebody was lying; he was merciless. They were experienced old-timers, and were real character formers in the most elevated sense of that word. By that I mean a human being who by his attitude and way of handling people arouses respect and extends respect the same way to his fellow people. Don't lie. If you cannot make a statement - keep your mouth shut. There are a lot of ways not to express yourself that will help you through a situation, but don't lie.

These Roman Catholic fathers were real teachers. They did not try to convert, nor did they preach religion. Religion was strictly the responsibility of the professor of religion, and within the walls of the *Gimnázium* religion class was only for the Roman Catholic students, the rest of us got our weekly religious education outside. Protestants, Unitarians, Jews ect.

These teachers had a great influence on this Jewish boy who was later exposed to waves of Anti-Semitism, when he left the walls of the *Gimnázium*.



János as a young dandy with a pipe

AFTER SCHOOL RECREATION

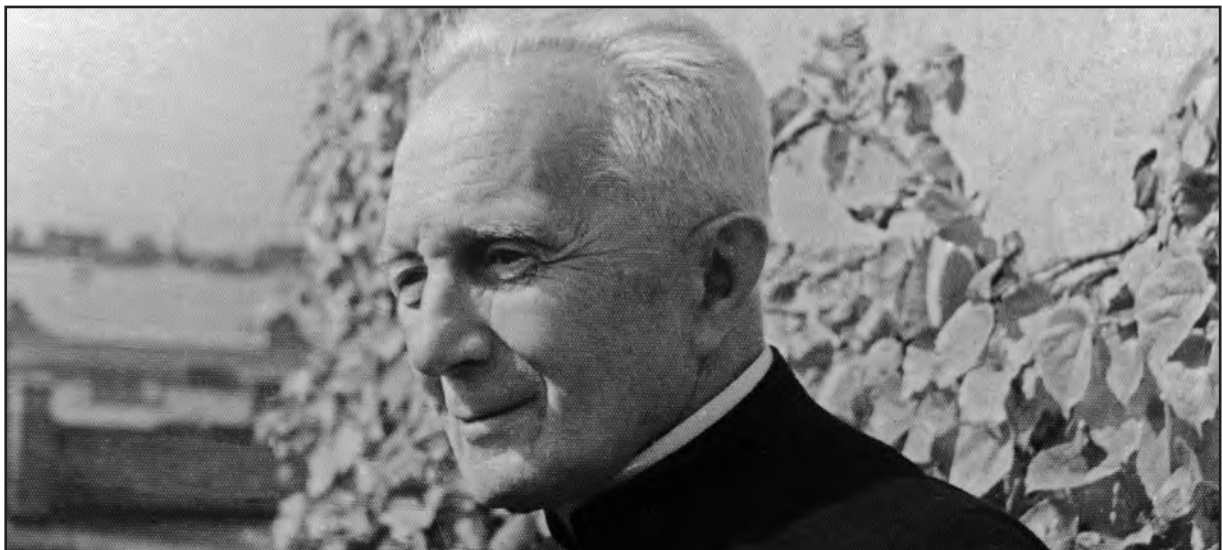
During the time of my secondary education, I played football with my schoolmates. We also started to go down to the river. The river had a tremendous importance in our lives. At an early age boys went to the river houses to learn how to swim and to row. We spent hours playing in the water. During the summer it was our regular routine to go to the river to go to swim, under surveillance, of course. It was first later, when we were in the upper grades that we had freedom to go out and about without surveillance.

I remember, when I started in the *schicksa Gimnázium*, which corresponds to 10th grade, I got my first silver cigarette case, because my parents were in general pretty liberal.⁶⁶ They had no qualms about my smoking, but I had to be very careful not to catch the attention of the Piarist Fathers; smoking was not tolerated at the school.

The faces of my schoolmates are murky; I remember of course Pista Csanyi and that poor pompous ass, Bandi Karman, who was the prize pupil. Many years later, when we were in tenth grade in the Piarist *Gimnázium*, and after a lot of friendly persuasion because he just did not want to go, I took him down to the venerable house of ill repute of Mr. Gáspár Angyal and negotiated a deal for him. Finally I talked him into coming: "One day you will have to try, after all, so you might as well get going for Christ sake" or something like that. I remember it was in the afternoon and not all the women were available for students, so I could not get the best one for him. I escorted him to the respective suite, and I remember that before I pushed him through the door, he asked me: "Janci, which hole do I have to put it into?" I answered him: "She will show you. Just ask and she will tell you." And then he disappeared. In due time, he re-emerged without any signs that he had lost his virginity.

ANTI-SEMITISM

During the last two years of my high school (1921-1923) virulent Anti-Semitism prevailed, which of course cannot be compared to the Nazi type Anti-Semitism. Still the after effects of the one year Red Terror in Hungary left waves which carried through in the national life.⁶⁷ Many Anti-Semites tried to take advantage of the prevailing receptive mood at the time.

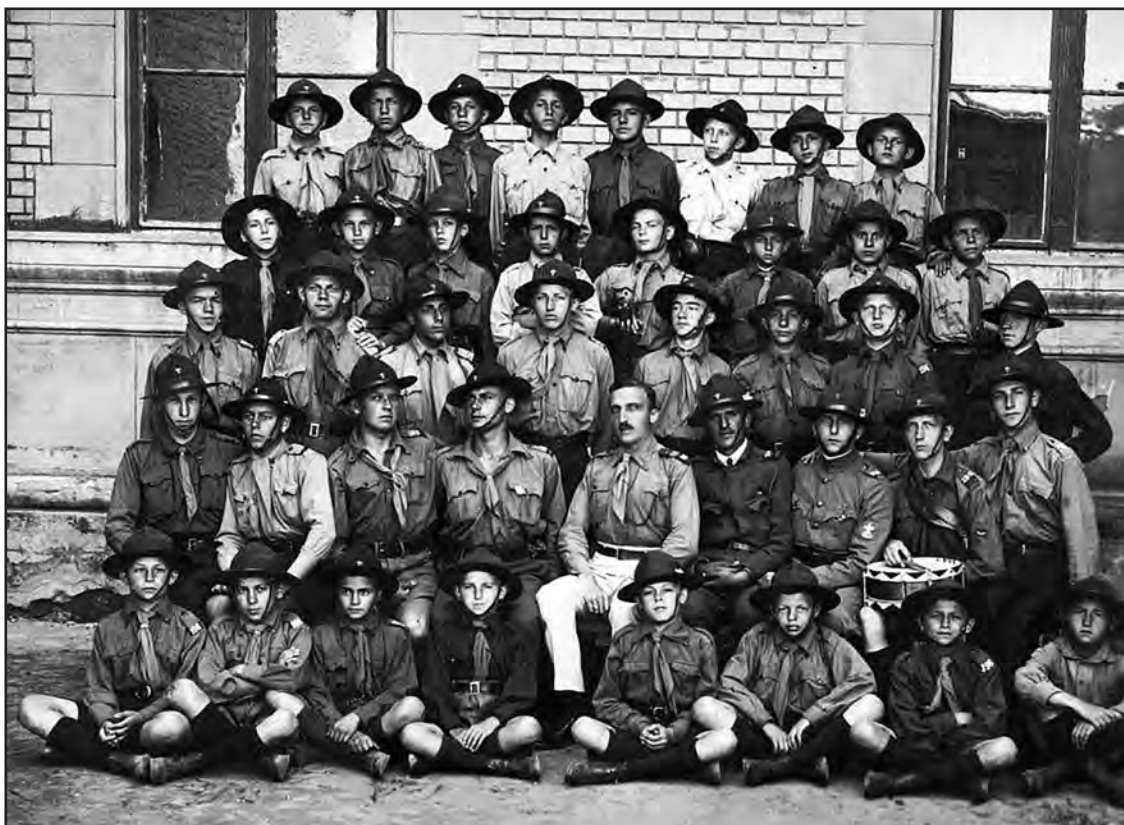


Father Kercai

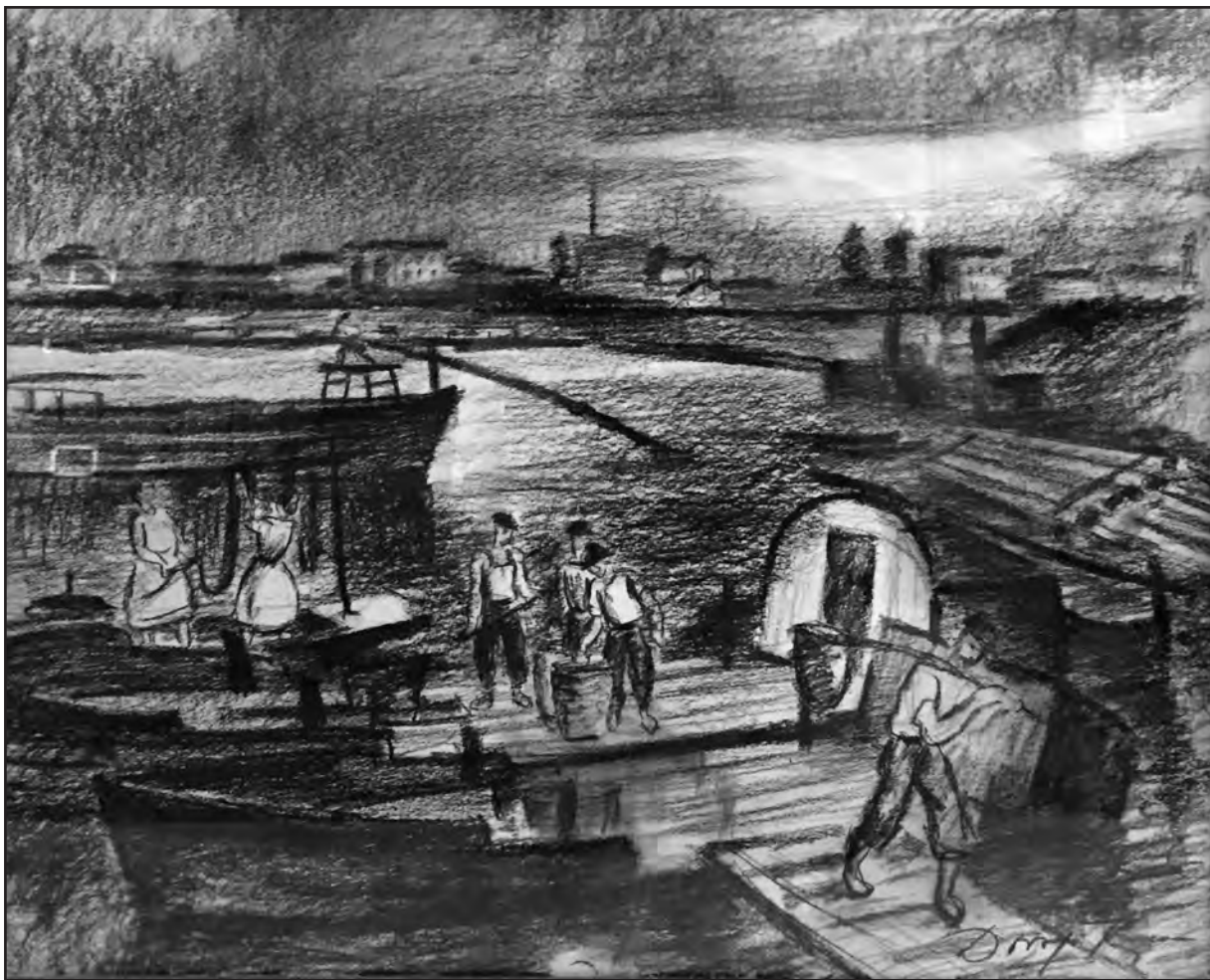
The principal, Father Kerkai, took over my class when I was in the 9th grade. He became the regional headmaster of the Boy Scouts and did the job in his very charismatic, enthusiastic, and persuasive way. At that time there was no question about Jewish boys participating in the Boy Scout movement anywhere else in Hungary. But it is a compliment to Father Kerkai that he wanted to create a precedent and one day he advised me and my three other Jewish friends to join the Boy Scouts. We all said no. We didn't see how we could feel comfortable in that organization.

Father Kerkai was persistent about the Boy Scouts but he couldn't persuade us. There was no open Anti-Semitism displayed in the classroom, but still, the reverberations of the general trend were always discernible in the atmosphere. It never came to any open excess, however.

One day he ordered us up to his office and told us point blank that one of his colleagues who taught another class, and who was also an officer in the Boy Scout movement, had proof that we had been seen on several weekday afternoons entering a prominent house of prostitution in the town. (It was a very commendable institution that could flourish during that time, but later, around 1924 or 1925, to the general chagrin of the affected male population of the city, the ultra-catholic political shakers and movers succeeded in cancelling the licenses.) Anyway, this "thing" was ground for immediate expulsion. So he gave us the choice of either entering the Boy Scout movement or being expelled. After a very short deliberation, we decided to join the movement. We became the only troop in the whole country of Jewish Boy Scouts. Of course father Kerkai's idea was a very commendable but embryonic idea, and the times that were approaching certainly did not help further his efforts in that respect. But for about a couple of years, I was a Hungarian Jewish Boy Scout.



Hungarian Boy Scouts 1925 ©fortepan Botár Angéla



*Working on the River Tisza near Szeged: above charcoal on paper by Imré Dorogi
below photograph by Lisa Adler 1937*





View of central Szeged from the banks of the River Tisza

LIFE ON THE RIVER

I have been talking about the upper circle of Szeged society; we were a very amphibian group of people, spending a major part of our lives on the river. During the summer months, the upper middle class youth lived and entertained in the so-called river regatta houses. I remember, the two most prestigious clubs had many Jews among their members.

With the advent of the white terror, the Jewish members were summarily expelled. They formed a group under the leadership of Eugene Pick, the Salami manufacturer, and started a movement and founded the Szeged Regatta Club with a membership that was exclusively Jewish. So we found a way to continue our way of life under the changed circumstances with just a little adjustment.

Actually, I left Szeged before the Szeged Regatta Club was opened. I went to Vienna where I inscribed in the *Hochschule für Welthandel*.⁶⁸ I lived in Vienna until I received my Diploma, in 1927. So I was away from Szeged between 1923 and 1927. But when I got back, I immediately joined the Regatta Club.



From the left: Vidor Varga, János, Éva, Pirir Winter, Bondi Kertez, István Fodor, with an unidentified friend in the Tisza circa 1937 © Timár Lisa



"My famous picture taken in the Gömmeri Studio, a photographic establishment more modern than the other ones. Actually this photograph was taken by a very lovely and likable girl friend of mine, Éva Wellisc, who was assisting Sari Gömmeri, who was the wife of a very well know pediatrician.

This image was exhibited for several months in the window of the studio and people made wisecracks about it. I was 21 or 22 years old. [1926/1927] And as you can see I was preparing to go out in a diner jacket with my black bow tie to some kind of very important social function." János Adler tells Manuel Sellner while looking through photographs March 8th, 1984 in Los Angeles.

TRIP TO ESTONIA

I travelled with a Hungarian group to the Congress of Three Nations: Hungary, Finland and Estonia, that was held every three years.

These have been the three relatives in the so-called Finno-Ugric group. I couldn't find any trace of any resemblance in the languages. Neither Estonian nor Finish resembled Hungarian in anyway. But we enjoyed a tremendous trip. It was organized by the Finish-Ugruian society. Our group of several hundred people had a special train that first stopped in Poland. And I applied since at that time Jews were still included, maybe not very happily, but none the less. So I was allowed to go.

We went to Poland, and from Poland to Riga, Latvia, where I had a very funny experience at the railway station. I was just walking around on the platform next to the train and a guy came up to me - it turned out, he was a Latvian journalist and he invited me, I don't know if it was a lunch, anyway we sat down and he offered me a drink. Now there was a full glass, it looked like water. I don't know what it was, maybe some kind of vodka, a tremendously strong thing. I drank it like water and boy, did it knock me out. I was nearly unconscious and entirely drunk. I don't remember the rest of the day. But he helped me back to the train somehow. That was my experience of Riga.

Then came the boat trip to Estonia. In Estonia, we spent a couple of days together with a lot of interesting people who considered us to be relatives.

I got together with a very sweet girl. (The Estonian girls were just beautiful: beautiful, blond, slender, very good-looking.) She invited me home to her family. It turned out that her father was the protestant priest of the community. I was maneuvering around the fact that I was Jewish. I didn't tell them. Because of my Hungarian education, I had been taught that it is no good to talk about it. During the two days I was in town, she picked me up at the hotel, and took me around. She

was very nice. We spoke German and she gave me a good bye kiss and that was that. It was a very clean, neat relationship.

I had a tremendous impression of Estonian people because they looked very attractive and very clean. I read recently about the new developments and how the Estonians and Latvians are pulling towards the West. They are Protestants. And the Lithuanians, who are Roman Catholic and still very bigoted Roman Catholics. They were very rough on their Jews. They killed them wholesale during the 1940's.



János in Vienna 1926

JÁNOS IN VIENNA 1923 -1927

When I lived in Vienna I was really a playboy. I was let loose from a very controlling society. Though my parents were not very strict, very liberal actually, and let me loose to travel, I still had been living in a nutshell [in Szeged]. Then I was let out into the real world in Vienna. At that time Vienna was very gay. It had recovered from the wounds of the First World War and ha ha ...

Bachelor life in Szeged 1927-1937

My life in Vienna couldn't be compared to life in Szeged. In Szeged, I lived a very set, comparatively easy-going life. There was time for everything. I was relieved of the home chores, because we had servants in the house. Transportation did not take any time, because the city was so little.

When I returned from the *Hochschule für Welthandel* in Vienna to Szeged in 1927, I was employed by the *Agraria Aktiengesellschaft*, which had originally been my father's grain export company. I got a modest salary, but I didn't have to contribute anything to my upkeep at home. As a matter of fact, I could give *Taschengeld* to [my brother] Dini.⁶⁹ (Laugh)

At that time, Dini was in the upper classes of high school, and for his friends I have been, well, a man of the world - having lived three years in Vienna, and spent a year in London, and half a year in Paris. I brought back books. I gave Dini my *Westermann Atlas*, which was very concise, having been made with German precision, an economic atlas of the world. The big difference between Dini and me is that I didn't really care what I was going to be. Dini knew from the beginning what he wanted to be, and that was a tremendous help to him.

Well, I was just the older brother, who built a very intimate relationship with that school kid. We had very much in common and we kept no secrets from each other. It was just a very, very close relationship. Later on the relation became always closer. In due course, he joined the Regatta Club, and then we spent time rowing together, and enjoying the river life together.

At that time we were in a small circle - a pretty good group of intellectuals. It was pretty colourful togetherness, in a peripatetic society.⁷⁰ Having time on our hands, walking and discussing things.

So, it was a condition *sine qua non* to be up-to-date with the literature and events in the world.

Professional activity just took a limited amount of time, so every afternoon, after lunchtime, I went to the Lloyd club for a coffee and a little chit-chat. The major newspapers were laid out on a table. When I say major papers I mean: the *Pester Lloyd*, which was the first class German language newspaper in Hungary, the *Neue Freie Presse* from Vienna, the *Neue Frankfurter Zeitung*, one of the best German papers, the *Illustrated London News*, the French daily, *Le Temps*.⁷¹ I would study the financial sections of each very carefully; and when I came across an expression or sentence I liked very much, I took out my little notebook and wrote it down.

I would use those expressions in the German correspondence I wrote on behalf of Agraria, in my role as German correspondent. Father, who otherwise could be very critical, was very pleased with my German letters. He had to admit that I could write better German than he or his partner Rosenstock, who was also very good at German.

German culture played a very, very, very important part in our life. Therefore, it was a tremendous disappointment when Hitler came to power in Germany. It felt like we were being thrown out of the German *Kulturkreis* that we had been very proud to be a part of.

I read all of the newspapers and beside that I was proud that I was à jour with

world literature. I may have, at times, had preferences for Austrian and German, or English or French literature, but the important authors, I just read.

I did not just read reviews of the books in the *New York Times Book Review* or in the *New York Review of Books*, like I do now. I don't have the time, even now that I am retired. Of course, my eyes are no good either. So unfortunately, I can't read the books but I do read reviews about books.

In the *old country* we read the books.⁷² The great Russian novelists, for example: Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Pushkin, and Goncharova, were all very popular in Hungary and the translations of their books were excellent. We knew their names and we didn't just talk about them; we actually read their works. As we did those of Gerhard Hauptmann, and important French authors like Anatole France. We read George Bernhard Shaw. And as many of the great American writers we could find. It was commonplace in my group of friends. We spent a lot of time reading; not just reading the books, but also discussing them. To use an expression from Greek philosophy, we were a peripatetic society. It was a walking and discussing society. That was a time when the written word was still important: both newspapers and books. Radio was in its *Kinderschuhe*.⁷³

I lived my pleasant safeguarded life in my parents' spacious apartment where I had my own big room near the entrance. My little brother, Dini, lived in a small room that had been cut out of the big master bedroom at the other end of the apartment, close to the bathroom. My parents were very liberal in that respect, they didn't influence my way of life at all.

I was pretty much a womanizer, which was a particular thing in Szeged, because the very pleasant houses of ill repute had been closed down by the new Horthy regime.⁷⁴ Very religious and so on. The clergy had a big say in the matter; so no more whorehouses, which was a tremendous mistake! Because that used to take care of at least the well-to-do middle class youth. Previously, I could go down to those places and have sex with the girls who kept pretty clean and were controlled twice weekly. If you were lucky, one of the girls there really liked you and taught you everything so you would know how to do the thing and not to mess up with your bride, like many of the virginal husbands did on their honeymoon night.

After the whorehouses were closed, going out with girls, and maybe getting them *schwanger* was a dangerous and expensive thing to do.⁷⁵ I tried to avoid it. So those who could specialized in married women, like I did. That was dangerous too, obviously. So anyway, that was pretty much the way I operated. So sex-wise I was taken care of - no problem. Once in a while I would make a trip to Budapest and find something extracurricular. So my sex life was taken care of. I wasn't really very eager to get married being a *hartgesottener* bachelor.⁷⁶ I was jealously safeguarding my way of life and it might seem funny, but I was kind of a Jewish Anti-Semite. I didn't like Jewish type girls and I didn't like pronounced Jewish attitudes.



Photos of János from the family album

FUTURA COMPANY

Around that time I had to leave the Futura Company. It had formed an ill-advised relationship with the fascist Hungarian produce organization that actually had monopolized the Hungarian produce business. The general director was the offspring of a famous Hungarian nobility family and came down [to Szeged] and personally invited us to create the Szeged branch of Futura. Szeged was a crossroad having both railway and boat traffic. It was an important hub for shipping of wheat, corn, rice, and maize in big *Schleppers* (as we called the barges on the river Tisza) to the Danube and further out of the country.⁷⁷ You needed real local knowledge of the surroundings in order to handle that business. Therefore they had selected people, who were qualified to do the business.

They did it [same procedure] in other cities too. In due course they kicked them in the ass the same way, as they ... well, they didn't do it with Father, they didn't do it with me, but after three years, I couldn't take the humiliations and the insults and I quit.

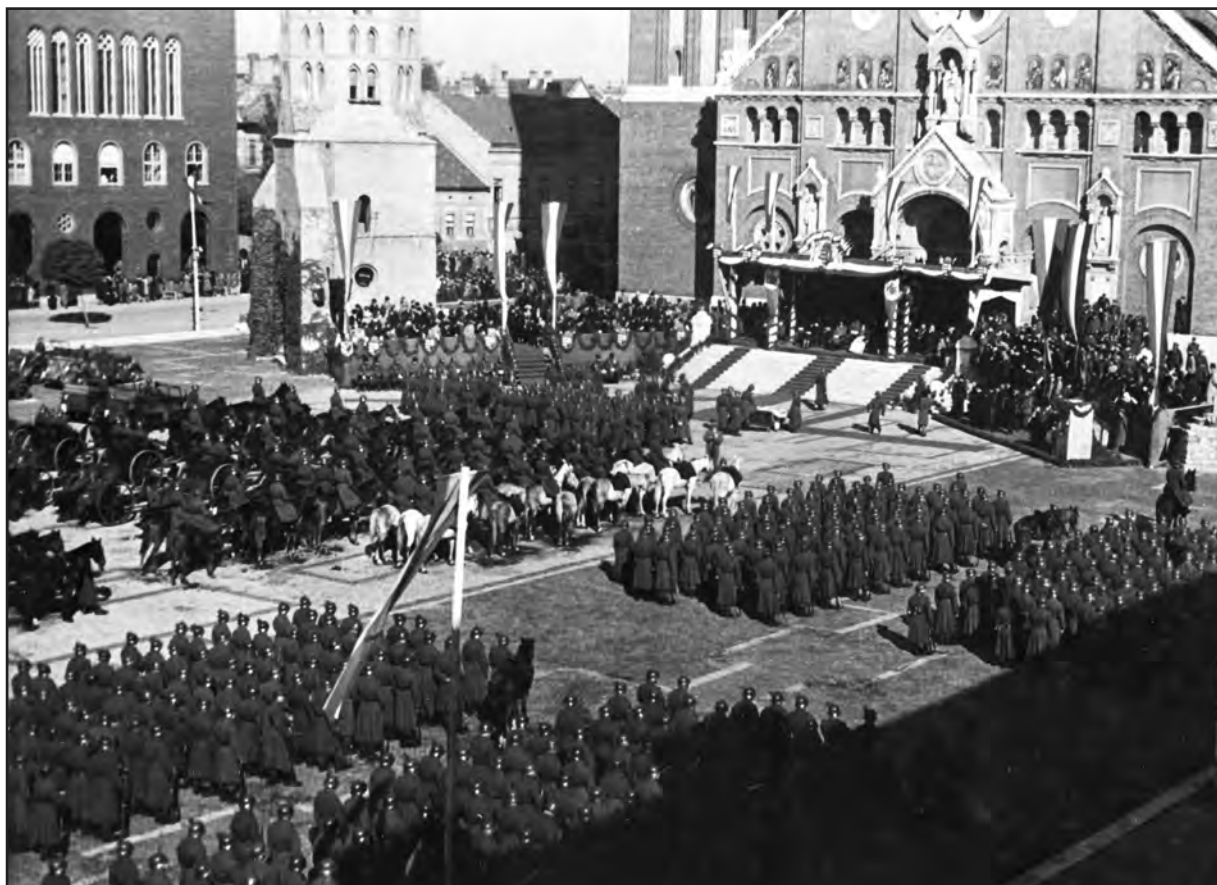
Father had also gone through hell. He had developed a heart condition during that period and a year later he had to leave too.

That was the end of the Futura story.

After Futura I became associated with the Orión leather factory, which was one of the companies associated with our bank. The director was a close friend of my family and he took me under his wing and gave me a fairly decent job there.



Barge used for grain transport on the River Tisza



*Military parade June 18th 1937, on the occasion of Regent Miklós Horthy's 69th birthday.
Szeged Cathedral Square© Fortepan, Plesovszki Ákos*



János dancing with Éva one summer evening in the park, 1937



How Jancsi met Éva

OOOH! That was something else. That was something else. I was already over 30 years and an ossified old bachelor. I knew two girls in the Szeged upper middle class Jewish circle, to whom I was really attracted. One of the girls was Reka Kaufmann, but she was very involved with a gentile boy, and the other was Éva Timár.

I only knew that she was a very good looking and charming girl. I had danced with her occasionally at balls. After the ball season came the skating season. We didn't have any artificial ice in Szeged, but there was an artificial lake. When the weather was cold enough, it became a skating rink. It turned out to be an unusually cold winter and the skating season lasted for two months! On Sundays the military band played. Éva was a good skater. She could dance, *Bogen* and *Walzer*. It was during the winter I became really interested in Éva. I went skating every day and we became more and more involved.



Éva resting after a swim at the Regatta Club



János catches Éva photographed by Lisa Timár 1936

Éva was a very good-looking girl. She had actually passed for a gentile [when she was] in Nazi occupied Vienna. She made occasional trips to Vienna with her work as fashion designer and she happened to be there on the day when Hitler made his famous *Einmarsch* and the Viennese went CRAZY. Éva looked like a little *Schickse* so she could walk back and forth without being noticed.⁷⁸

One day I told myself: “Jancsi, my boy, you are stuck.”



On skates 1937



Éva and Jancsi on the Tizza, 1938



Éva's step-father Julius Neumann in Szeged

I knew Éva was a stepchild of Julius Neuman, who was a very rich and disliked member of the Jewish community.⁷⁹ He had a big hooknose, and very aggressive manners, but basically he was a generous man.

He had married Berta, Éva's mother, a divorcée with two daughters. He had his own daughter Susan, and it was no secret that she [Susan] was going to inherit everything. He didn't adopt Berta's daughters. But he did give all the girls an excellent education and they were very well taken care of.

The fact that Julius Neumann had not adopted Éva didn't bother me at all. I wasn't interested in Julius Neumann. I was only interested in Éva. I had made up my mind; if she wants to marry me, I want to marry her. One day I told her that I would like to marry her. Happily, she said yes.

Then I had a little conversation with Julius. He was a very straightforward guy and I was also a straightforward guy. I said: "Look Uncle Julius, what about a dowry"? In those circles a dowry was the condition *sine qua non*. He said: "No dowry. No dowry. I will give her a beautiful wedding dress, a beautifully furnished home and I will give you financial support for one year and that's it." I said, "Fine, it's a deal, I just wanted to know where I stand. But honestly, if you would have said that you would give me nothing, I would have wanted to marry Éva anyway."

So he respected me and I respected him. As a matter of fact, he became very friendly - so friendly that when we got ready for our honeymoon, he said: "János, I want to join you." I said: "JOIN?" Now, that would have been financially to my advantage, because obviously, he would have footed the bill. But I said: "Do you want me to be the laughing stock of the whole Regatta Club?" (Laugh) "No joining, no joining. It is my honeymoon and I will go with my wife. I know how to take care of her and I don't need any assistance." (laughs)

He took it in stride. We never got really close, but we had respect for each other and became friends. Every week he would come to our place for dinner. We had a very beautiful apartment in a good section of Szeged. We had beautiful furniture handmade to order. Berta, Liza and Éva decorated the apartment superbly.

Éva got a first class dowry. She was so elegant! We lived in our apartment and were in seventh heaven.



THE WEDDING

Our wedding was a big thing. It consisted of two parts: a civil part and a kind of Jewish part under the so-called *huppah*.⁸⁰ Emancipated Szeged Jews continued to practice the wedding rituals, as well as the big holidays: the Jewish New Year, and the Day of Atonement, when we all would go to the synagogue and discuss politics.

The first day we had a civil ceremony at the registrar's office in the city hall. My Father and György Gábor, my director, were with me. Julius Neumann and Ference Szekely, his lawyer, were with Éva. The four witnesses witnessed and we kissed dutifully. We completed the paperwork, and so the marriage was performed.

The next morning I wanted to leave, I didn't want any monkey business, but I said: "Okay, if Berta [mother-in-law] wants to throw a reception, fine, but then the wedding should be in the at 9 o'clock morning". Nine o'clock was very early for a wedding, but we showed up at the little old synagogue, under the *huppah* and we



Wedding ceremony in the Synagogue in Szeged, unidentified couple circa 1935



The old Synagogue in Szeged

were dutifully married according to the ritual. I didn't understand anything! But I stood there. Éva said I was very pale. I didn't look good because I had chronic gastritis; the Adler cuisine wasn't exactly dietetic.

Immediately after the ceremony we went to the reception at the Neumann home. And then we got on the train and we left for our honeymoon. And that was it.

I really did have chronic gastritis, and a very sensitive stomach. So it was a god's blessing for me, when Éva took over. The chambermaid at the Neumann home loved Éva. She moved in with us and became our maid and cook. She really was an excellent cook and her style of cooking did me a lot of good. The Neumann family had a very refined cuisine because Gyula was always on a diet. It was quite different from the heavy fatty, 'good' Szeged peasant cuisine that I grew up with in the Adler house.



Cook preparing stuffed green peppers for the Neumann family



János and Éva leaving Szeged for their honeymoon.

HONEYMOON

Already in 1937 there were *Devisen-komplikationen*⁸¹ meaning that if you belonged to the rich industrial upper class circle in Budapest it was possible to travel to a foreign land. If you didn't, you had to participate in a group travel. That way you paid in Hungarian currency and they took care of it [currency exchange] and then you could travel. We wanted to go to the Italian Riviera and we booked a tour, but we would have to wait about one week before the group left from Budapest.

We spent that week in Lillafüred, a newly built luxury hotel in a castle.⁸² We went by train to a city called Miskolc by train and then we had to rent a taxi to Lillafüred. It was at one of the highest points in the mountains, at an altitude of about 800 meters.

Then the famous incident happened (and Éva is always very happy to remind me about it). It was a very elegant place, so we went up to our room and dressed for a formal dinner. Then we went down to the dining room. Everything was beautiful, the rooms were beautiful, and the service was beautiful. In the dining room we were



Lillafüred Hotel [photo from the homepage of the hotel]

surrounded by waiters. And here I am with my new bride. I pulled out the chair and I sat down. (Laugh) That was a big success. (Laugh) She enjoyed it tremendously. Typical John Adler!

[Éva passes by and Manuel asks her “Did you enjoy your honeymoon trip?”]

Éva answers: “Yes, it was a lot of fun. Mostly I remember, we arrived late at night, so I changed over to my evening dress, because after 10 o’clock you had to be very elegantt. Everybody was in evening dress and drinking champagne and what not. We went down to the dining room and Jancsi pulled out a chair and I thought he pulled it out for me.... and before I realized it, he was already sitting on the chair. (Both laugh) That is what I remember best.” János adds: “You see, I didn’t lie.”

But we had a marvelous time in Lillafüred, and met a very nice gentile couple from Szeged, with whom we spent a lot of time and became very good friends. We just had a great time, and quickly the day arrived to get ready for the trip abroad. We took to the train down to Salerno. It was really a nice honeymoon trip, the combination of the Hungarian nice, new luxury hotel and then down to Italy. We even went to Nice on the French Riviera for a one-day trip.



*The elegant dining room in Lillafüred
[modern photo from the homepage of the hotel]*



*János and Éva leaving Szeged for their
honeymoon.*



János and Éva on their honeymoon together with the “very nice gentle couple from Szeged”



Julius Neumann at the barber shop being photographed by Éva Timár 1937



Friends on the beach - János second and Denis third from left



János, second from right with Györyi Klein, István Fodor, and two other gentlemen



*Villy Hönig, Vidor Varga, István Fodor (?), Piri Winter and György Klein
Stefania park, Szeged, circa 1939*



János sharing a peripatetic moment with a friend (perhaps George Popjak) 1939



János (standing third from left) with other members of the Szeged Labor Troop in 1942

World War II: Janós Adler's war

My father had been in a respected military position, but now we can talk about my disgrace.

During the first part of 1940, under German pressure, the Hungarians organized an improvised "labour service." It was local at that time, we were not sent out of the country yet.⁸³

*[In 1942, János Adler was officially conscripted into the Hungarian Labor Troops. By the spring of 1942 there were 43,000 other men in the Troops; of those only 3,000 came back. Szeged had three companies in the Hungarian Labor Troops.]*⁸⁴

First we were stationed in a military camp in Kunszentmiklós, about 116 km from Szeged. They finally gave us army boots and army caps, though we were still wearing the civilian clothing we had on when we came in. And they gave us each a yellow armband. That was it, the Royal Hungarian Jewish Military Labor Service! Later we were moved to Kiszombor near Makó, about 33 km. from Szeged.⁸⁵



*Jewish Labor Troop from Szeged stationed in Kiszombor in 1942
János and Éva in front with Duschak László and his wife next to them.*

EASTERN FRONT

*[In July 1942, János was sent with his battalion to the Eastern Front to join the 2nd Hungarian Army in Russia. They were set to dig trenches and collect the dead Hungarian soldiers from the no man's land.]*⁸⁶

That is a very funny story. First there was a death march with the Hungarian Army to the front line. It was a 700-kilometer march with full baggage to Kursk.⁸⁷ I only made it to the front line because there were two doctors from Szeged who pushed and dragged me.

We *Arbeitsdienstler* had various assignments. I was in a group that was assigned to the medical staff. Among the doctors was Csanyi Nussbaum from Szeged who became my mentor. He tried to give me assignments that were less stressful and more tolerable. One day, a group of four of us was assigned to go out into the no man's land at night to collect dead Hungarians, and to bury them.

That was a very, very good assignment. After that kind of an assignment we would get two days off. There was a risk that the area had been strewn with little so-called infantry mines by the Russians. They were just little explosives, enough to create trouble if you stepped on them with your toes or your heel. Dr. Nussbaum made sure that four boys from Szeged were selected and the sergeant dutifully took us to the edge of the no man's land and said: "Good luck boys, you know what you are supposed to do, see you later." We stood there, on the edge of the no man's land, the four of us. "So all right, let's get going!" That turned out to be difficult, because of the four of us: Lamberg, Kardos, Lévy, and me, only three of us were up to it. Lamberg was shaking like a leaf and he started to cry. He was so scared that he just couldn't move.

I was kind of the leader of the group and so I said: "Now look, let's not monkey



Hungarian Labor troops in 1944 ©fortepan Angyalföldi Helytörténeti Gyűjtemény

around you stupid assholes. I'll tell you what; I will start walking and you follow in my footsteps. Then you can feel safe." So that's what happened. Siegfried [Lamberg] was, by the way, the son of the Oberkantor of the Szeged Jewish community. Anyway, we got going and suddenly rububum! A loud bang, a flame goes up, under my right foot. The flame went all the way up to my balls. It turned out that because I had a three-millimeter thick steel arch support in my boot, my foot was saved. I had stepped on the mine with my heel. But instead of tearing me all apart, it just gave a tremendous bang and caused considerable damage in the bone structure of my foot. But it remained more or less in one piece. No bleeding. So the boys, crestfallen, *schlepped* me to the road. There they put me down. The Red Cross trucks drove back and forth to the front, and I guess that I was picked up and taken to the improvised field hospital.



Labor service in 1944 ©fortepan

THE FIELD HOSPITAL

Anyway, I was picked up, put onto a stretcher and into a truck. The ride to the hospital was one of the most horrible experiences of my life. What a road! The ride was bumpy and everything kept rattling. My foot was just hanging there; it was bloody murder. Finally, when we arrived at the field hospital my boot was removed. My foot was very swollen. There was no X-ray available at all, so to make a long story short, my foot was just put into a cast - as it was.

That was sometime in September or October.⁸⁸ My foot stayed in that cast until we got to an improvised hospital just behind the front line. It was a hospital for all of the various kinds of soldiers, who were brought in.

THE JEWISH ROOM

I was installed in the improvised hospital. Most of the patients were Hungarians; though there were also some Germans and a few Romanians. Of course, the Jewish labor service men were segregated in the Jewish room. And I was put in there. I made myself a scratcher out of copper wire; and with the scratcher, I could get in underneath the cast to scratch because there were lice in there. It was a very unpleasant thing to do. I would get up very early in the morning, always as the first one of the group, because one little container of water with potassium permanganate and a sponge was brought in.⁸⁹ It was to serve as sanitary service for 30 people. I was always the first one to use it each day.

One day the head of the Jewish group, my friend Dr. Grünwald took me to see Dr. Nagy who had taken care of me before, and operated on me once already (I had gotten a horrible carbuncle on my left side because of all the filth).⁹⁰ This time he looked at my foot. It looked really bad. Dr. Nagy decided to operate. The operation was duly performed and that is how we got to know each other.

He would always stop at my bed during the morning inspection rounds. Dr. Nagy had a nickname for every Jew in the Jewish room: 'dirty Jew', 'snotty Jew', 'filthy Jew', etc. He called me the 'gentleman Jew'. I remember that after the operation, while he was dressing the sore, he looked up at me and said: "You know gentleman Jew, a decent gentile would have died of that wound. But you were lucky enough to have survived, congratulations!"

THE STORY OF THE GOLD COIN

I had a ten crown gold piece. It had been the good luck coin that my mother had given to my father when he was drafted into the army at the beginning of the First World War. He came back and happily delivered the gold coin back to her. It had served its purpose. So, when I had to leave, my mother gave it to me.

Now the rest of the story of the gold coin is that there was a transitory period, when the Hungarian army retreated, the old beaten army left, and we were left alone in the Jewish room. Sometimes there was a little food available, sometimes not. But we were always hungry. Now, there was a fellow who was hanging around there, he was from northern Hungary, a Karpato Russian who spoke Hungarian, Russian and Czech. He was a clever guy and I told him: "Look I am hungry and I need some food and I have a gold coin. I am ready to barter it for food." And he promised me

everything. The end result was, he got the gold coin, and I got about two or three deliveries of food, then it stopped. Goodbye gold coin. I felt very let down. That was the story of how I lost the gold coin.

THE WEDDING RING

The time we were left alone in the Jewish room, when the Germans and Hungarians left, before the Russians came, we assumed that the Russians soldiers would take everything away from us; and jewelry would be the first to go. Watches were number one. But anyway, I just decided, that I would swallow my wedding ring. Then I would see what happened. I figured I could watch my excrement in the shithouse and so I had gotten some nice sticks and I was ready to look. But I never succeeded in excavating the ring from the heap of shit.

That was the last I saw of my wedding ring.⁹¹

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU MEAN BY “RELEASE ME”?

Okay, that was one episode. Another episode happened in December, maybe around Christmas time, a short time before the Russian offensive.⁹² Dr. Grünwald came in to me and told me: “my little Adler, come with me. I am very sorry but I have to release you.” I said to him: “What the hell do you mean by release me? Here I am with only my summer clothes and my foot in a cast, and you want to release me? Should I go back to my unit? That is a death sentence, you know that.”

Apart from the fact that I would freeze to death, the yellow band on my sleeve would ensure that the first truck that went by would certainly run me over. The Jewish labor service men were treated like dirt.

“Well” he said “what the hell can we do?” So we put our heads together. He said: “You know, obviously Dr. Nagy likes you, maybe I could talk to him, and ask him to operate on this leg of yours. He could take the cast off, get an x-ray taken, tear your leg apart and put it back together again.” “Well” I said “that doesn’t sound like a very nice project, but it might mean I live instead of I die.” So I asked him, to try to sell the idea to Dr. Nagy. If you can get him to do it, I’ll go along with it.” So he said “alright.”

The next day Dr. Nagy stopped by and said: “Well gentleman Jew, I understand you trust me to make your crippled ankle work?” “Yes, Sir”, I said. “Alright.” Grünwald: “Write him up for an x-ray!”

The next morning I got dressed with all the available warm clothing I could find, I got two crutches and managed to get myself to the x-ray station with the help of Dr. Grünwald. When we got there it turned out that a part of the x-ray machine was kaputt and the Lieutenant in charge had to left Kiev to get a replacement. So no x-ray! We went back to the Jewish Room and Dr. Grünwald reported back to Dr. Nagy. Dr. Nagy said: “So put him back in the Jewish Room and when the x-ray machine is fixed, we can try again.” Well, the x-ray machine never got fixed, because the Russians came.

And that changed the story ENTIRELY.



German prisoner of war in Russia photo Bundesarchiv

Prisoner of War

Oh, the Russians arriving - that was exciting! ... First, looking out of our window, we could see the beaten German army retreating. There were Hungarians mixed with Italians, Romanians, Germans - you name it.

Suddenly, we heard some rumblings in the distance. The noise came closer and closer. It was the sound of Russian tanks; Russian tanks with young Siberian soldiers sitting on top in their *wattiert* uniform in the bitter cold.⁹³ They seemed to be having a good time. They were coming to take possession of the hospital. I think they called the place *Alekseyevka Nikolayevka*.⁹⁴

Just before the Russians came in, two heavily wounded Hungarian soldiers were brought into the Jewish Room on stretchers, and put down. I don't know why, but they were just left there when the hospital was evacuated. There was no attempt to evacuate us. We were just stuck in the Jewish Room with these two guys, when suddenly a tall Russian lieutenant walks in with his revolver drawn. Behind him were two soldiers with *dawai* guitars, primitive Russian submachine guns.⁹⁵ Anyway, they came in with their machine guns and the Russian officer, started to speak [in Russian].

Now, it turned out, that among the Jewish wounded were two Karpato Russian Jews: Eichhorn and Schwarz, both of them heavily amputated. They answered the officer's questions. I just was just watching the scene from my bed. The lieutenant waved at the two soldiers who then went over to the stretchers with the two Hungarian soldiers ... rupupum, rupupum ... *dawai* guitar. Finished! Deathly silence!

I thought that I would be next. I only vaguely remember that part. I had read in some medical book that when you are close to death, scenes from your life roll before you very fast like a film. Something like that happened to me. I thought, well this is it, the end.

Then suddenly the lieutenant turned around and walked out and the two soldiers followed him. (Sigh)

We tried to adjust to life in a Russian controlled place. I think the hospital had been built for about five hundred people, but it turned out that it had been designated as a gathering place for wounded prisoners of war. Quickly, the whole place was filled with all different kinds of war prisoners. Some of them dying, some of them trying to stay alive.

Our Jewish group was functional, so we took over the administration of the whole damn place. We tried to stay alive in any way we could and we tried to continue functioning. We had supplies; cans and conserves, so we managed somehow.

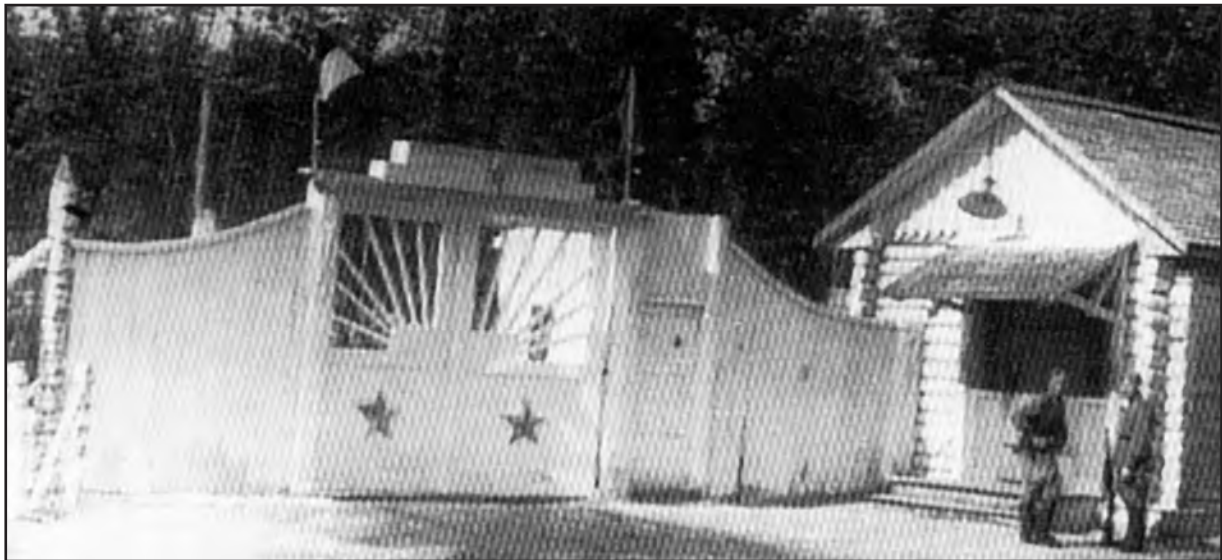
It was mainly typhus that decimated the group. Out of the five hundred men, only about one hundred of us survived the typhus.

The Russians decided that something had to be done, so the remaining prisoners from the hospital were put on a transport, and delivered to Tambov. Somewhere on the Moscow-Saratov line, about 418 kilometers south of Moscow; that was the *nr. 188 Tambovska Lager*.⁹⁶ A new life started for me in that camp. Many others were transported away to other camps, but I stayed in nr. 188 until the end of the war.⁹⁷



Prisoners of war in Tambov Camp

<http://www.passionmilitaria.com/t39774-tambow-camp-de-la-mort-pour-les-malgre-nous>



Entrance gate at Tambov camp, July 7, 1944 ©State Military Archive Moscow
<http://www.passionmilitaria.com/t39774-tambow-camp-de-la-mort-pour-les-malgre-nous>

PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMP TAMBOV

I was ordered to do political work and therefore I was in daily contact with the German segment. I just couldn't hate those soldiers. The *Mitglieder* of the German group liked me; they knew that I played along with the demands of the camp leadership. But basically I told everyone the same story; that I was just an old capitalist and that even though our had life collapsed and probably wouldn't be reborn again, in the mean time, I would cooperate. But I said that I was not a communist. I just had a gut feeling that the old way of life was changing. But I had no faith in the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, so I had to be very careful how I handled myself. I was pretty successful in that respect.

LECTURER

Because I spoke German fluently, I was ordered to hold lectures to the group of German officers.⁹⁸ So, I had a lot of opportunity to talk with them and that made me popular, and honestly with all that unhappiness, I could not hold it against the population of that camp, and I am talking about 10-12,000 soldiers. They had just been going through bloody murder.

When the *politrucks* saw that I communicated with the German officers, they said that I was to hold lectures for the German prisoners about the institutions of the Soviet Union.⁹⁹ I reported that I would do it, but that I didn't really think it was very interesting. I had to study a lot. I was very careful not to make discriminating remarks.

The political instructors tried to analyze the prisoners to find out who belonged to the *Gestapo*, *Schutzstaffel* and so on. Those officers were then put on a special transport. Tambov wasn't really an officers' camp; the officers were sent on to Moscow.

The political instructors kept an eye on everything and noticed that I was the only foreigner; the only one at all the German officers would speak to. The German's didn't talk to or even notice anyone else. They seemed convinced that all the others were communists.

Being so amiable with the Germans brought me to the attention of the chief of the Hungarians, a group of about 500 men. *Nemes* was a dedicated old time communist with crippled fingers, who had been tortured before he succeeded to get out of Hungary.¹⁰⁰ He sought me out and made my acquaintance. One day he disappeared; it turned out that he had become the leader of the Hungarian group of soldiers and *Arbeitsdienstler* [*Labor troops*], who formed the *avant garde* of the progressing Russian troops. Their job was to smooth the way for the Soviet soldiers. They did translating and so on.

In our prison camp, I was one leading intellectual type. I survived with the help of *Nemes*, who accepted me for what I was. I told him: "*Genosse Nemes*" [everybody was called *Genosse*, I hated that!] "*Genosse Nemes*, I know that our world collapsed, I am ready to cooperate, but I am not a communist. I want to help with whatever I can to build the new world, whatever it will be, but for the time being I am a progressive old time capitalist." And that impressed him very much! All the other intellectuals became turncoats, became communists, very communist, totally communist and bullshit.

Anyway, *Nemes* left the next day. At the *Proverka* the Russian officer told me: "*Adler, Nemes has made you the leader of the Hungarian group.*"¹⁰¹ It was a tremendous mistake, because the intrigues started immediately. By then the communist members were in the majority of the Hungarian group, and they said, "*Adler is just a clerk. He isn't interested in the cause and he has no enthusiasm.*" It was all true!

Only later did I find out who he really was. His name was Desz  Nemes and he played an important role on the eastern front and much later in Hungary.¹⁰² When I finally did get back to Hungary, I found out that *Nemes* was a *Mitglied* [member] of the Hungarian Politb ro. He was a big shot.

I administered things. I distributed papers. I got to read the papers. I still had to do some studying, and do the lecturing. I did what I was told and held lectures; I was instructed to talk about institutions and about the Russian educational system.

I got myself in trouble with the political leadership because I was just a colorless administrator without any enthusiasm and that of course, for the leader of the Hungarian group was no damn good. So I got myself in disfavor and I was deadly scared that they would put me on a transport one day. Now, I didn't really want to get on a transport because you didn't know if you would arrive at the end station alive or dead. So no transport!

But I became quite popular with the Germans, and one day I was invited to deliver a speech. I don't remember what the occasion was, probably the first of May, I don't remember, but the German group had requested that I talk about the Jewish question.

Anyway, as far as the German officers went, I came to the conclusion, that there was a tremendous difference between the older officers and those of the younger generation, in other words: those born and educated before Hitler who did not seem very inspired by the Nazi ideology, though I don't know the reason. To me they seemed to be regular conservative, sometimes archconservative citizens.

But the new breed, the young lieutenant commanders, were different. When I brought up the matter of genocide, and if they believed in genocide, they would say:



Arrivée au "camp des Français d'un convoi d'incorporés de force
(©collection Jean Thuët/F.A.T)



L'appel (proverka) des effectifs valides de chaque baraque
(©collection Jean Thuët/F.A.T)

Drawings by prisoners from <http://www.passionmilitaria.com/>

"That is what the *Führer* said, so that's what has to be done." I thought that those men should be put to the wall and shot. But otherwise, I never could have a grudge against the simple soldiers who had been forced into the army. I felt that to try to educate a young lieutenant or a young *Oberleutnant*, was a waste of time.

I considered the Hungarian Jews as having been the *Fackelträger* [torchbearer] of the German Culture. So, if I put the things that were happening into a historical perspective, then the nightmare of Hitler's genocide was a transitory step in history. I was convinced that the allies would have the final victory, and Hitler would just disappear. That somehow seemed to make a tremendous impression on the Germans. And to a certain extent, I think that I might have been right.

There were usually about 10 or 12 officers, all of whom were transported away sooner or later, who would come up to me: "*Herr Adler, wie geht es an der Front?*" [Mister Adler what is the news from the front?] and I would tell them. There was one middle-aged major I remember in particular, who always pulled me aside to hear the news from the Front. We always had a little personal talk and I remember he told me: "*Herr Adler, was wollen die Leute von mir? Ich bin kein Nazi! Ich bin kein Faschist! Ich hasse sie alle! Ich bin ein alter Reaktionär!*" [Mister Adler, what do people want from me? I am not a Nazi. I hate them all. I am an old reactionary.] (laugh) That was so cute. That is what he was, a reactionary. One day he too disappeared. Tambov was a transit *Lager* [camp].

So that is how it went, I was very lucky in that respect. The *politruks* wanted to send me to Moscow, for further schooling. I was deadly scared of that plan.

One of the cultural leaders of the Hungarian club was a very able Jazz musician, and he wanted a sunken orchestra pit. So they dug one for him and I fell into the hole, which was ... my *Beamter Pubi's* hole.¹⁰³ I had broken my leg again.

The German first lieutenant surgeon tried to put my foot together, without X-ray of course. It got dislocated again. No good again. He made me an improvised cast out of gypsum taken from the head ornament of a building, that had been broken up and put together again so it took 24 hours to dry, instead of seconds.

The first one was no good; the second one was no good either!

But I had a lot of time to think after I broke my leg again. I needed a plan of what to propose to the *politruks* and what to do. That is when the idea of creating an international news service was born. It was very well received. The political management of the camp bought my idea; that was how I became the international news commentator, which was a beautiful thing because all I had to do was to translate stuff from the big papers and read it up in German and Hungarian.

So, I finally had succeeded in wiggling my way out of the political work, which I hated because I had been forced into it. So, I organized an international news service for the camp. I thought it would be good for the German prisoners if they could hear a lucid interpretation of the situation on the front.



Prisoners-of-War at Tambov - <http://www.passionmilitaria.com>

CELEBRITY

Every night I went to read the nightly news together with my Hungarian translator, a linguist, who spoke fluent Russian. He would translate the details of the late night international news for me and I would then edit and write it up for the different groups: the Italians, the Hungarians, and the Germans. Each group would get their own news with what would have been their local news in the beginning. One version was for the Italians, and different one for the Romanians, and another for the Hungarians. I delivered the news to the Hungarian group on an improvised radio myself and I worked with the German secretariat on the news for the German prisoners.

So, during the last year of the war, I was the head of the international news service in the camp. Every day, I collected news from the three major papers and from the

nightly radio calls and edited it. I built up an international secretariat, of prisoners who could translate into German and I would edit the translations and deliver the news.

So, whenever I went out, people would come up to me: “Mr. Adler what’s new? What’s happening? Obviously everybody was interested in what was happening on the front and wanted to hear the latest news.

Thank God I had wiggled myself out of the political work, which I hated desperately and I succeeded in becoming an international news commentator. Because of my job, I was a celebrity in the camp.

The German officers came up to me: “Mr. Adler, is there any news?” I got a kick out of it. After all, I was a Hungarian labor serviceman, a Jew. And I realized one thing - that the news job was the only thing I really believed in during that time. It was a big success, and I became the best-known person in the camp; everybody was interested in the news.

During 1944 the news coming in was very exiting! The Allies were winning on the western front and winning on the eastern front ... and then one day - armistice!

I was the one who broke the news to the other prisoners in the camp.

One day, sometime after armistice, came the *prekas*, the *Befehl* [orders], that prisoners over the age of 40 or more than 75% invalid should report for a medical examination. That group was to be on the first transport to leave very soon after. I was qualified both because of my age and because of my crippled ankle. So, I was duly selected to go for the medical checkup. And I was all ready to go, when a messenger came from the politruck: “Adler you don’t get to go. You have been selected to go to Moscow.” I thought I would die!

Anyway, now we are getting to the critical situation.

My job as head of the international news service meant that my direct boss was the chief Political Instructor, a Russian. I reported to him and told him that I was 75% invalid and I should go for the medical check up.

He replied: “No, Adler you stay. I want to send you to Moscow!”

Moscow! Jesus Christ! I was in horrible, horrible shape!



Memorial for the Hungarian prisoners of war who died in the camp at Tambov



Memorial monument in the Jewish cemetery of Szeged for those killed while in the Labor Troops

Two days later, a messenger came from the Major Doctor asking: “Where is Adler?” The Major Doctor remembered me from the days when I was bedridden in the hospital. He would often stop by my bed and sit down. He could speak a little English. I could also speak English. So we had long conversations in English. He asked me what I knew about Russia and especially about my knowledge of Russian literature. He was not exactly a youngster: he was up in his 50’s. We discussed Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Lermontov, and Goncharov. He had been very impressed, so he remembered me. That turned out to be my big luck!

He asked about me, and the political instructor, the politruk, said: “That Adler stays!” The doctor said, “What do you mean, Adler stays?” Well, the whole situation irked him and it went on like that for two days, back and forth between the politruk and the the surgeon major. Finally, the doctor took the matter to the camp commander Potkolkov, a lieutenant colonel.¹⁰⁴ He decided the matter short and fast: “*Politruk*, you say that this man has to go to Moscow. Do you have *prekas* [an order]?” “No Sir, I don’t have a *prekas*.” He didn’t have a *prekas*, but he had submitted my name. Commander Potkolkov said, “The major has a *prekas*, Adler qualifies for that. He goes on that transport! Good bye!”

Thank God! I was on the transport and that was it!



Unidentified landscape through a train window from the family black&white negative collection

Returning to Szeged

After that happened I started to breathe and I took everything in stride after that.

Then the fantastic trip back to Szeged started. It took us three weeks to get to the Hungarian border. Three weeks! That goddamn train got pushed around and shoved aside at every side station. Every time there was a transport that came in from the other side we got sidetracked. Everything else was more important than the war prisoners returning home.



Szeged-Rokus train station 1938

I was feeling pretty fatalistic during that time. Because I had been in charge of the news service I knew that the Hungarian Jewry, particularly the provincial Jewry had been exterminated. Mr. Eichmann took care of them. I knew that there was a good chance that nobody in my family would be alive. I tried to live with that fact.

I knew that my sister-in-law Lisa, was in Cincinnati, and that my brother Denis was somewhere in New York - I didn't know where really. That was all I knew.

But then when the train arrived to Budapest and was on the main line, and then turned onto the Szeged line, I began seeing train stations that I knew very well.

Something started to get tight in my stomach. I was really a nervous wreck! Because I still... I mean, a human being hopes.

Maybe ... maybe ...

Then miraculously I found myself at the railway station in Szeged. I don't know which fate guided that train.

When the train stopped at the secondary station of Szeged-Rokus I was supposed to stay in quarantine. The Russian cordon was there, as it was each time the train had stopped; but I didn't care too much. As a matter of fact, I succeeded to slip past the guards because I knew the place, of course. I knew where the telephones were and everything.

THE TELEPHONE CALL

I crept around to a telephone and called the Pick Salami Factory, because I knew that Mátyás Szász, my old friend should be there.¹⁰⁵ His brother András, answered the phone. I found out from him that my wife, Éva, was alive, my mother was alive, and my mother-in-law, Berta was alive. I told him: “Get hold of Éva and give her your bicycle. I am here at Szeged-Rokus, and I want to see her!” András Szász found Éva somewhere. He knew that our house had been totally devastated and that Éva succeeded in renting a room somewhere in the town close to the Pick Salamijar [factory]. András obviously knew that Éva was there.

So, he found her and he gave her the bicycle. She managed to get to the station where she found me standing like a stone. Just like a stone statute. I couldn’t move. I was so full of emotion and I was shaking. I had my walking stick because I was still crippled. I just stood there.

She ran to me. She embraced me. And then she asked me: “János, are you a communist?” (laugh)

You can’t imagine what I answered. Then we both laughed. So, anyway that is how it started.

Can you imagine? I found out that my mother, my wife and my mother-in-law were all alive!

I was so shook up ... It is still very difficult for me to describe the feelings.

RETURNING HOME

Our house had to be fixed up, because first the Gestapo and then the Russian political something had used it and it had been torn apart, literally. It was in a miserable condition. It wasn’t livable.

So when I came back she had a home for me in that room where András found her and directed her to the railway station, and that was fantastic. She had succeeded



After the war we lived in what remained of father’s house in Korona Utca #10

in finding some pieces of furniture and had made the place livable for us.

I changed my name from Adler to Árato. That was very funny. I just wanted to disappear. I didn't want that the officialdom should be able to find me. Because, I knew I was destined to be sent to the higher educational center in Moscow, which would have been a death sentence for me. I would have been together with elite communist types, intellectuals.

I was supposed to report to the Home Office and to the Party when I got back. I was expected to start "participating". But instead, I changed my name and I disappeared and just didn't want to hear anything about communists. By that time, due to my experience in Russia, I wasn't exactly smart, but I wasn't stupid either. I felt that there was something wrong in this whole theory they were teaching. The Marxist-Leninist teachings were full of contradictions that I couldn't reconcile with my own way of thinking. I could only see it as a big lie. That became increasingly clear to me.

1945-1948

Now the consequence of getting our names on the list at the U.S. consulate that day in December 1941 was, that when I came back from Russia, and I got in touch with the American consulate again, I was informed by those guys, there had been about 150 on the [quota] list before the war, and 31 came back to report in again after the war. And the ones on that list before the war, got a non-preference priority. We had been on the non-preference quota and so we got a non-preference priority and that meant that we were on the list.

It took two more years before we heard anything from the consulate about actually getting the visas. Those two years felt so slow.

Those two long years went very slowly. They let so few people go. Don't forget, the consulate in Budapest was just one link; there were consulates all over the world. I don't know how those 30 people before me on the list fit into the total picture. Anyway, it took two more years and after we had gotten permission, we had to figure out the finances.



Borcsa and János Szeged



János Áráto (right) in Szeged September 27, 1947

We sold our few things. I had done well at my job and had gotten paid. But at that time Hungary was already very strict, we could not take any money out of the country. I remember that I had three sets of suits made for me and clothes made for Éva.¹⁰⁶

Emmigration

Anyway we got on the Arlberg Express on the 22nd of February 1948.

I still remember how nervous I was. Because I had already been so intimidated and saturated by the ways of the Russians, and I knew that the Arlberg Express passed through Austria. At that time Austria had a Russian zone, a French zone, an English zone and an American zone. I knew that our train would have to pass through the Russian zone and that there would be a passport inspection.

In my stupidity I thought that I would run into problems because I had been a prominent and well-known member of the war prisoners in that camp Tambov, and

because the *politruk* had been fighting to keep me and not allow me to be released. They had wanted to send to the Moscow higher political educational institution.

I thought, my God, maybe my name is on the list and they will arrest me, when we arrive at the border to the Russian zone of Vienna. We were in the sleeping compartment when the passport inspection came through the train, and when the Russian soldier nodded to us, we handed him our passports, he just handed them back. I was shaking – there is still a dark shadow somewhere inside me.

On that train, I was thinking about my life in Hungary: “I don’t ever want to see the happy murderers from the right and I don’t ever want to meet the happy murderers from the left either! I have had it!” I would never go to any country behind the iron curtain because I am instilled with that kind of thinking. In a country like that you are at the mercy of the system, and if the system for some reason, sensible or not sensible picks you up, you are out. OUT! That is what I dread.

That is the reason I have never gone back, and never will. No sir. I have had it!

The Arlberg Express went through Vienna, and then through Switzerland and France to Paris. From Paris we took with the train to Cherbourg. We sailed across the channel and then we spent a week in London.



János Adler & Éva, Szeged 1946



János Arató and Éva Timár passport
issued in 1948



LONDON

On our voyage to the United States, we came through London. My schoolmate, László Jakobowics, who had been a very poor Jewish boy when we were in the Jewish Elementary School, had become a very well-to-do boy. He and his two brothers had been involved in international valuta transactions and the *Valutenpolizei* had been hot on their heels, so they felt that they better disappear.¹⁰⁷

They disappeared in the nick of time, and went to London and built up a beautiful business. László became a very well-to-do boy. So, when I was in London, he was one of my main helpers. He made reservations for me in a hotel close to his large office and he looked after entertainment and was really very nice to me. His older brother, whom I never liked, had his office on the second floor.

One day, I was sitting with László in his office, and he was explaining his business to me, which was very interesting, but that is another story. His brother Julius, an *Aufschneider* called down and said: “Tell János to send his little *Schikse* up to me.”¹⁰⁸ I would like to meet her.” He had heard that Adler’s wife is a gentile girl. Because she looked gentile, they figured she was a gentile. “Send up the *Schikse*” and I said: “to see the *Schickse*, he should come down”. Well, he didn’t come down and I didn’t send Éva up. They never met. Anyways, I didn’t like him.



Receipt from The Imperial Hotel in London, February 1948



Poster for the Queen Elizabeth



János in Ohio



János as a night school student

America

And then we went over to America on the Queen Elizabeth.

New York friends took me to see the big white... what is the domesticated hare? The big white rabbit, with Jimmy Stewart.¹⁰⁹ The whole audience was laughing and I didn't understand anything. I thought: "Johnny boy, you got yourself into trouble here, and you have to start learning English again!" I thought that my knowledge of English was pretty good. But, I had my problems. After I saw that movie, I knew that I had to do something. So, when I got to Los Angeles, I immediately inscribed in night classes at the University of California in Los Angeles. That turned out to be very, very helpful.

NIGHT SCHOOL

I immediately started out with a course in public speaking. During the third or fourth session I had to stand up and deliver a story. I chose a topic of one of my first impressions of the United States. When I had been in New York, my friends had taken me to an Opera performance at the big national theatre, the Metropolitan. I remember I looked around and saw that no one was wearing a uniform. There were no uniforms! I was amazed. It was the first time in my life that I was in a social scene with no uniforms! In the old country, and in Vienna, in Germany all were full with uniforms. I had grown up with men in uniforms. My father was in the uniform of the Austro-Hungarian cavalry. During the First World War, two of my summer holidays were spent down in Strehaia in the German garrison where father served, so I saw uniforms. After my exposure to so much German military personal, I then spent the three years with German soldiers, and then with war prisoners, and the Russian soldiers. It seemed like everyone wore uniforms. I had a lot of experience.

But that feeling of German chauvinism that we felt so strongly in the German garrison during the First World War wasn't so pre-eminent in the prisoners of war group. Of course, a war prison camp is certainly not a place where chauvinistic and jingoistic thinking comes to the surface.¹¹⁰

Because I had heard it so often in Romania, I could still sing *Deutschland über alles* or *Die Wacht am Rhein*, from the beginning to the end. It was sung with so much enthusiasm that it isn't even funny!

REMEMBERING TRADITIONS

My brother's wife, Sylvia is very much anchored in Jewish friendships in Palm Springs.¹¹¹ Once Dini invited me to Passover *Seder*, and another time we were invited to a big *Hanukkah* celebration. Then I began to remember things.

My last religious educational experience was preparation for my *Bar Mitzvah*. In our family, for some reason, that was one tradition that was observed, I don't know why. On New Years Eve and on the Day of Atonement we went to the temple. And that was it.

My father, he could pray because he came from Makó, which was a very, very strict Jewish community even though it was on the Neolog side.¹¹² And my father had gotten a very strict Hebrew education so he knew how to pray in Hebrew. And pray he did.

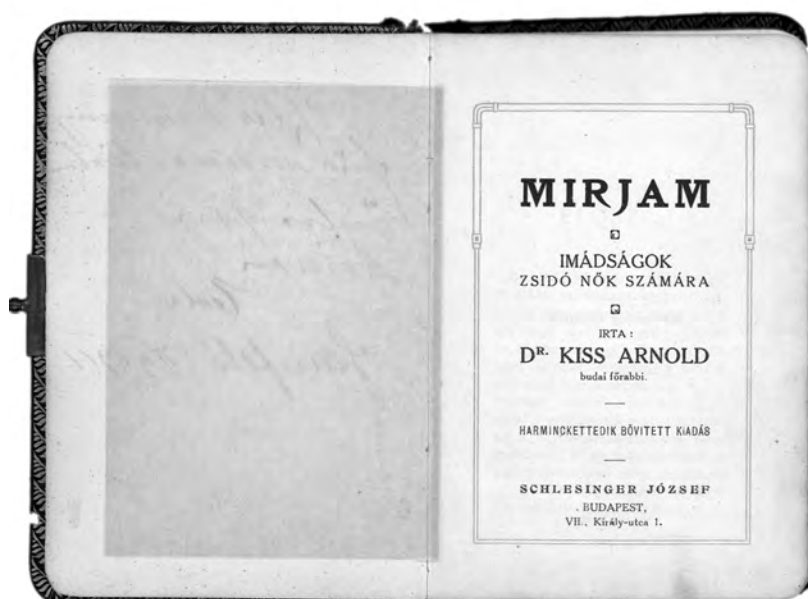
He knew all the books. He could do the rituals. But, in Szeged he got spoiled. In due course, he became a very emancipated Jew. He was a free thinker anyway. Religion did not mean a goddamn thing. What did mean something, and what was important to him, and to me too, was tradition. Tradition: the certain things one inherited.

My mother was liberal and totally disrespectful of Jewish habits and attitudes and such like. But there were certain things she cherished, because she had inherited them from her mother and her grandmother. When my Father died in 1939, she told me: "János, for one year you have to go every morning to visit the synagogue, and say *Kaddish* for your father." I said "Mother, I can't even read Hebrew." "You write it out in Hungarian (phonetically) and learn it!" And that is what I did. I still know it by heart and on the anniversary of his death, and on his birthday I say the *Kaddish*. I say the *Kaddish* for Mother and I say the *Kaddish* for Berta, my mother-in-law. I do it because it is tradition. Like that Jewish milkman, Teva, in the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*, I still remember how he said: "Tradition!"

But *Hanukkah* had a certain meaning, and it brought back lots of memories.

When Denis mentioned the *Seder*, it just triggered memories. So I thought, I would teach my sister-in-law a lesson. I would show her that I know something too. I remembered all the prayers.

It all came back to me. I could recite the full song that was sung in the synagogue at the advent of the *Seder*. And so I called Sylvia on the morning they were going to the *Seder*, and I sang the whole prayer to her on the phone. She was floored. And I got the satisfaction of really proving to her that I know something of that thing (Judaism), too.



Prayers and Devotions for Jewish Women - my mother's prayerbook

Words of Wisdom

I learned two sayings from my grandmother and two pieces of wisdom from the Hungarian army.

My grandmother Mamika spoke Hungarian with me. But Mamika was bilingual and used a lot of German expressions, German quotations and so on. She read a lot of German poems. So German was her second language. Even though she was entirely Hungarianized.

One saying was: *“Nichts dauert ewig, der schönste Jud wird schäbig.”*¹³

How true! I found that out.

The other one was *“Ein jedes Tierchen hat sein Pläsierchen.”*¹⁴

Basically she was a born democrat.

And two pieces of wisdom I learned in the Hungarian army (this doesn't sound so refined of course, because it's army talk).

One goes: “Don't stir the shit because it stinks more.” (laugh)

So very true, very true,wait a moment, what is the other one? The other one is very good too: “Don't screw an order because it multiplies.” (Laugh)

That is very true, too.



*János and Éva dancing with joy in the dining room of their new home
in the Hollywood Hills, 1961*



János and Éva at their home on Woodrow Wilson Dr. in Los Angeles during the late 1970's



János in Los Angeles 1955



János at home in Los Angeles circa 1990



János and Éva in Palm Springs, California, in the 1980's



*The Adler family by the pool at the home of János and Éva Woodrow Wilson Drive circa 1960.
Back row from left: Bessie Valentine, Berta Neumann and Borcsa Adler, János Adler
front row: Éva, Steven Adler, Barbara Adler, Nancy Valentine, Patricia Adler, Denis Adler and Thomas Adler*

AFTERWORD

On May 23, 1962 János Arato Adler was awarded 600 German Marks for *harm to liberty*, caused by NS racial persecution, from September 1, 1942 to January 15, 1943.

He never returned to Hungary.

Endnotes

1. Kiskundorozsma in Csongrad County was once a separate village, now part of the city of Szeged. <http://www.jewfaq.org>
2. Upon the succession of Joseph II to the throne March 31, 1783 “the Hungarian government issued a decree known as the “systematica gentis Judaicae regulatio”, which with one stroke wiped out the decrees that had oppressed the Jews for centuries.” <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com>
3. A description of political and social dynamics in Szeged can be found in Szélpál Livia K., “A Tale of Two Hungarian Cities: The making and reading of modern Debrecen and Szeged 1850-1914”, A dissertation in History, CEU, Budapest 2012
4. Historically, Jews did not have permanent family surnames at all. Within the Jewish community, patronymics, such as David ben (son of) Joseph or Miriam bat (daughter of) Aaron were used. Beginning in 1783, Emperor Joseph II ordered Jews to either choose or be given German family names by local committees. With the rise of Hungarian nationalism, the first wave of Magyarization of family names occurred between 1840 and 1849. After the Hungarian revolution, the process was stopped until 1867. After the Ausgleich, the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 that established the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary, many Jews changed their family names from German ones to Hungarian. In 1942 during World War II, when Hungary became allied with Germany, the Hungarian Defense Ministry was tasked with “race validation. Its officials complained that no Hungarian or German names could be considered safe,” as Jews might have any name. They deemed Slavic names to be “safer”, but the decree listed 58 Slavic-sounding names regularly held by Jews. http://www.wikiwand.com/en/History_of_the_Jews_in_Hungary
5. Schweiger, Schveiger, Svaiger see: https://Schveigerkipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Hungary
6. Later spelled Czinner
7. Janós Cziklai/Czinner
8. It was said that she sewed the bags and mended them herself.
9. Regina Czinner
10. Sándor Czinner later Csanyi
11. Emma Steiner née Czinner b. 1854
12. Paulina Leontine Wilhelm née Czinner b. 1859
13. Adolf Wilhelm b. 1851
14. János Jakab Zeew Wilhelm b. 1880 changed the family name to Vadász in 1896,
15. Francis Joseph (b.1830 d.1916) Emperor of Austria (1848–1916) and King of Hungary (1867–1916), divided his empire into the Dual Monarchy, in which Austria and Hungary coexisted as equal partners. <http://www.britannica.com/>
16. Mátyás Czinner later changed family name to Csanyi
17. Leopold Löw (1811–1875), rabbi, historian, and Judaic scholar. “Leopold (Lipót) Löw was the outstanding reform rabbi of nineteenth-century Hungary. One of the first rabbis in Hungary to combine rigorous traditional training with a university education, he advocated religious, educational, and communal reforms in his manifold roles as preacher, polemicist, editor, scholar, and historian. He played an important part in the fight for Jewish emancipation and the Magyarization of Hungarian Jewry.” <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org>
18. Löw set out to master Hungarian, and in 1845 he preached one of the first Hungarian sermons in the synagogue, declaring, “Let the synagogue naturalize Hungarian, and hope that the Hungarian will naturalize the synagogue!” <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org>
19. Rabbi Immánuel Löw (1854–1944), rabbi, orientalist, art historian, and member of the Hungarian Parliament. “The son of Leopold (Lipót) Löw, chief rabbi of the Neolog Jewish community of Szeged,

Immánuel Löw completed his university and theological studies in Berlin and Leipzig. The Jewish community of Szeged elected him its rabbi in 1878 (his father had died in 1875). After World War I, he was imprisoned for 13 months because of his condemnation of the White Terror and Admiral Miklós Horthy.” <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org>

20. Like his father, Löw was an outstanding orator. Several hundred of his sermons were published in four volumes in Szeged between 1900 and 1939. He translated the Song of Songs into Hungarian, wrote a prayer book for women, and co-wrote a history of the Jews of Szeged, one of the first Hungarian communal histories (1885). <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org>
21. Borcsa Cziklai b.1885 d.1975
22. Rezső Abraham Adler b.1874 d.1939
23. Mariska Csanyi née Czukor, b. 1891 later murdered
24. Downtown Szeged, close to the Keleti palota
25. Belá Adler b. 1909 d. 1912
26. Sweet pastry horn
27. *es fai:* and sons
28. (medical) Pertaining to or affected by rickets. [from 18th c.]
29. *Hochdeutsch:* high German
30. *Fraulein:* nanny
31. Bohemia was a duchy of Great Móravia, later an independent principality, a kingdom in the Holy Roman Empire, and subsequently a part of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Austrian Empire. After World War I and the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak state, Bohemia became a part of Czechoslovakia. Between 1938 and 1945, border regions with sizeable German-speaking minorities of all three Czech lands were joined to Nazi Germany as the Sudetenland. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bohemia>
32. *Spatziergang:* a walk
33. ‘*Ein General sprach mich an.*’: A general spoke to me!
34. *plagegeist:* pest, nuisance
35. *rablo zsander:* a ‘cops and robbers’ game
36. Jancsi added “My father had bought the house very prudently for 110,000 gold crowns just before the mobilization in 1914, investing nearly all of his cash. *Korona utca* is now called *Hajnóczy Street*. The house was on the corner of *Bolyai János Street* and *Hajnóczy Street*.”
37. *einlage:* Insert - hairpiece
38. *Schächter:* kosher butcher
39. Johann Markgraf von Pallavicini (Pallavicini János őrgróf) 18 March 1848 – 4 May 1941, an Austro-Hungarian diplomat, notably serving as Ambassador at the Sublime Porte during World War I.
40. *laissez faire - laisser passer:* let it go
41. Uncle Sándor Csanyi (Czinner) and his wife Mariska and their son Mátyás
42. Anyu’s three sisters: Ilona b.1876 d.1880, Margit Ujhelyi née Cziklai b.1878 d.1945, Rozsa Marberger née Cziklai b.1891 d.1976
43. *Főzelék:* vegetable soup
44. *es tarsa:* and partners
45. Referred to as Natan Eisenberger in some records
46. According to Records of Hungarian Marriages: Mrs. Selma Einsenberger née Blau

47. "A Jewish elementary school for boys, which consisted of four grades, was established in Szeged as early as 1820 and operated under the supervision of Rabbi Leopold Loew. However, because of his participation in the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, he was no longer able to serve as the school's principal, and a Christian principal was appointed in his place. Four grades for girls were added in 1851. The municipality began contributing to the school beginning in 1860. During the 1902-1903 school year the school enrolled 574 students; during the 1916-1917 school year there were 483 students in the school. There were also a number of Jewish students studying at the University of Szeged, exceeding even the legal quota placed on the number of Jews officially permitted to study there". Beit Hatfutsot/Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv: <https://dbs.bh.org.il/place/szeged>
48. Lőw Immánuel: *Meló Chofnájim és Mivchor. A zsidóság legfontosabb fogalmai és értékei*. Szeged, 1929. The key concepts and values of Judaism.
49. Karl (Carl) Friedrich May (1842 – 1912) was a German writer best known for his adventure novels set in the American Old West. His main protagonists are Winnetou and Old Shatterhand.
50. In 1868, the Kingdom of Slavonia was joined with the Habsburg Kingdom of Croatia into the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia, which was part of the Habsburg Kingdom of Hungary and Austria-Hungary. Administratively, the town was part of the Irig municipality. In 1910, the largest ethnic group in Kamenica were Serbs and the second largest were Croats. A smaller number of Hungarians, Germans and Slovaks lived there as well. In 1918, the town firstly became part of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, then part of the Kingdom of Serbia and finally part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later renamed to Yugoslavia).
51. The summer of 1917 was disastrous for the Austro-Hungarian military campaign. On the night of August 27, 1916, three Romanian armies, launched the Battle of Transylvania through the Carpathians. Initially, the only opposing force was the Austro-Hungarian First Army, which was steadily pushed back toward Hungary. In a short time, the towns of Braşov, Făgăraş and Miercurea Ciuc were captured, and the outskirts of Sibiu were reached. In areas populated with Romanians, the Romanian troops were warmly welcomed, and the locals provided them considerable assistance. However, the rapid Romanian advance alarmed the Central Powers, and within weeks sizable reinforcements began arriving at the scene. Eight divisions and an Alpine Corps were deployed under the command of Erich von Falkenhayn. The Austro-Hungarians also sent four divisions to reinforce their lines, and by the middle of September, the Romanian offensive was halted. The Russians loaned them three divisions for operations in the north of Romania but hampered their efforts by failing to provide much-needed supplies. See: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%96sterreich-Ungarns_Heer_im_Ersten_Weltkrieg
52. Refers perhaps to *Tapferkeits Medaille* and/or *Verwundetenmedaille*: Medal for Bravery or Purple Heart
53. *Deutsche Militärverwaltung in Rumänien*: German Military Administration in Romania
54. As a major port on the Danube, the freedom of trade facilitated the entry of goods by boat from Vienna and the exchange of material necessary for economic development.
55. The Junkers were the members of the landed nobility in Prussia. They owned great estates that were maintained and worked by peasants with few rights. They were an important factor in Prussian and, after 1871, German military, political and diplomatic leadership.
56. See: Kaiser in Rumänien Sinaia. Emperor Wilhelm II visits Romania with GFM August von Mackensen, September 1917 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYsWWi67k7s>
57. *Der Österreichisch-Kaiserliche Orden der Eisernen Krone*: Imperial Austrian Order of the Iron Crown.
58. Lt. von Bredow: Several members of von Bredow's family are possible. They were descents of Bismarck and many of the men were in the military. Possible: Ferdinand or Hasso.
59. János' younger brother Denis who was born on March 12, 1914, was with the family on vacation in Strahia.
60. Between present-day Poland and Ukraine

61. *requiescas in pace*: May he rest in peace.
62. *ad vitam and sanguinem pro patria nostra*: with life and our blood for their country
63. Established in 1837, the firm specialized in publishing foreign (non-German) language titles, especially those written in English.
64. Including the son of the chief Rabbi.
65. The Red Terror in Hungary (Hungarian: *vörösteror*) was a series of atrocities aimed at crushing political rivals during the four-month regime of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919. It was so named because of its similarity to the Red Terror in Soviet Russia in both purpose and effect. It was soon followed by the White Terror against communists.
66. *Schiksa*: used here to mean non-Jewish
67. “There were several reasons for this “new” Anti-Semitism: the search for a scapegoat to blame for the defeat in World War I; negative sentiments raised by difficulties experienced by Hungarian refugees from successor states; economic competition; the prominence of Jews in economic and cultural life; and the role some Jews—or those perceived to be Jewish—played in the revolutions. The most vital ingredient of anti-Jewish sentiment was the manner in which Hungary was established anew following the loss of national territories: national integration was now based on ethnic principles. After the stabilization of the political situation in 1921, violent antisemitic acts subsided but Hungarian society continued to be characterized by nationalistic, right-wing and anti-Jewish attitudes.”
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Hungary
68. In 1919, “University of World Trade” became a national university with a three-year course of study. The first two semesters were mainly devoted to commercial preparation, the following focused on training for international trade and banking business - with subjects in economics, law and trade. The graduates were awarded the academic degree of *Diplomkaufmann*.
<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/the-university/about-wu/history/>
69. *taschengeld*: pocket money, allowance
70. *peripatetic*: with reference to Aristotle’s practice of walking to and fro while teaching.
71. *Pester Lloyd* 1854 to 1945; until 1945 it was the leading German language publication in Hungary. Its origin was a vital part of the modernization of Hungary in the 1850s.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pester_Lloyd.
Neue Freie Presse (“New Free Press”) known locally as “Die Presse” was a Viennese newspaper founded by Adolf Werthner together with the journalists Max Friedländer and Michael Etienne on 1 September 1864. It existed until 1938.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neue_Freie_Presse
Die Frankfurter Zeitung wurde 1856 als „Frankfurter Geschäftsbericht“ von Leopold Sonnemann und Heinrich Bernhard Rosenthal in Frankfurt am Main gegründet. Seit 1860 firmierte das Unternehmen als Frankfurter Societäts-Druckerei, in der dann von 1866 bis 1943 die „Frankfurter Zeitung“ erschien und mit „Neue Frankfurter Zeitung“ ergänzt wurde. Ihre Redakteure sahen sich der Schaffung einer liberalen, demokratisch-sozialen Gesellschaft verpflichtet. <https://de.wikipedia.org/>
Le Temps vécu du 25 avril 1861 au 29 novembre 1942. Inspiré par son modèle anglais The Times, il fut un grand organe modéré et libéral, largement ouvert sur l’étranger.
<http://www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr>
72. My own father, uncle, aunt, grandmother consequently referred to Hungary as “the old country.” [ed.]
73. *Kinderschuhe*: in it’s infancy
74. During his first ten years in power, Horthy increased repression of Hungarian minorities; placing limits on the number of Jews admitted to university and legalizing corporal punishment. Under the leadership of Prime Minister István Bethlen democracy dissipated. His political party, the Party of Unity, won repeated elections. Bethlen pushed for revision of the Treaty of Trianon. After the collapse

of the Hungarian economy from 1929 to 1931, national turmoil pushed Bethlen to resign as Prime Minister. Social conditions in the kingdom did not improve as much of the country's wealth was in the hands of few. Jews were pressured to assimilate into Hungarian mainstream culture. The desperate situation forced Regent Horthy to accept far-right politician Gyula Gömbös as Prime Minister. He pledged to retain the existing political system. Gömbös agreed to abandon his extreme anti-Semitism and allow some Jews into the government. In power, Gömbös moved Hungary towards a one-party government like those of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Pressure by Nazi Germany for extreme anti-Semitism forced Gömbös out and Hungary pursued anti-Semitism under its "Jewish Laws." Later the Jews became scapegoats for the country's failing economy.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikl%C3%B3s_Horthy

75. *schwanger*: pregnant

76. *hartgesottener* bachelor: hardboiled bachelor

77. *Schlepper* - barge

78. *Schickse*: Shiksa (Yiddish: shikse) is an often disparaging term of Yiddish origin that has moved into English usage (as well as Polish and German), mostly in North American Jewish culture, as a term for a non-Jewish woman or girl.

79. Julius (Gyula) Neumann, second husband of Berta, Évas mother.

80. Wedding canopy under which a Jewish couple stand during their wedding ceremony is a symbol of the home that the new couple will build together. It is open on all sides to welcome people in unconditional hospitality.

81. Foreign exchange complications

82. The famous hotel was designed by Kálmán Lux and was built between 1927 and 1930 in neo-Renaissance style. One of the restaurants of the hotel is a Renaissance restaurant named after King Matthias. Its stained glass windows show the castles of historical Hungary. The hotel is surrounded by a large park. Lillafüred (Miskolc-Lillafüred) is a town in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, Hungary. Officially it is a part of Miskolc, actually it is almost 12 kilometres away from the city, in the Bükk Mountains.

83. In 1940–1941, Jews were excluded from regular military service and were required to perform forced labor service. By November 1942, forced labor became obligatory for all Jewish males between the ages of 24 and 33. After the attack of the Soviet Union, forced labor units were also sent to the front, where their numbers gradually grew to 50,000. After the great breakthrough of the Red Army by the Don River (in January 1943), some 40,000–43,000 forced laborers had died or fallen into Russian captivity.

<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/printarticle.aspx?id=1680>

84. Sworn affidavit [in German] by János Áráto Adler. States that he is Jewish, originally Hungarian citizen, but American since November 27, 1953:

I always lived in Szeged. When they established the Jewish work brigade, I had to report to Kuszentmiklos and was immediately kept there. That was on May 16, 1942. The number of my brigade was 105/III. At the front, I served in Brigade 254/54. Our brigade was of course exclusively Jewish, and as an indicator we had to wear a yellow armband. Between May and July 1942 we were trained and in July 1942 we were sent to Russia. We joined the 2nd Hungarian Army in the [Don area???], and there we had to dig trenches, load munitions, build streets and, especially, to pick up dead Hungarian soldiers between the lines in nowhere's land [sic] and to bring them back and bury them. In the days between the 15th and 18th of October 1942 when I performed this task, I stepped between the [military] lines on a Russian landmine. I was severely injured on my right foot and was brought to the field hospital Alexajevka-Nikelajevka. As a Jew, I was not treated as required, so that today my foot remains crippled. I was still in this field hospital when Hungary withdrew in January 1943. While the army evacuated the Hungarian soldiers, it was made clear to me and about 30 other Jewish service members that they would leave us behind so that the Russians could do with us as they wished. Indeed the Russians

came, and I remained in the field hospital another 5 months or so, and was then evacuated by the Russians to [... text missing ...] where I remained about 2 or 3 months [... text missing ...] Prisoner of War [... remainder text missing ...] [Document in collection at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum]

85. Kiszombor is a village in Csongrád County, in the Southern Great Plain region of southern Hungary 5 kilometers from Makó. Photographic documentation of forced labor see http://tarsadalominformatika.elte.hu/tananyagok/dka/lecke30_lap3.html
86. Entry about János Adler from <http://library.hungaricana.hu/>: “In the spring of 1942 and it mobilized Hódmezővásárhely V kmsz. Battalion set up by V / 5th forced labor camp century was the second Hungarian army along the Don forefront. November 2, 1942, disappeared in unknown circumstances.”
87. During World War II, German forces occupied Kursk between November 4, 1941 and February 8, 1943. The village of Prokhorovka near Kursk was the center of the Battle of Kursk, a major engagement between Soviet and German forces, which is widely believed to have been the largest tank battle in history and the last major German offensive mounted against the Soviet Union.
88. Witnessed/notarized Affidavit/Statement of Dr. Sándor Narai, chief hospital doctor [German translation from the Hungarian], Szeged August 2, 1961: ‘Narai declares that from May 1942 he was in military labor service in Kunszentmiklos, Hungary. In July 1942, he along with many others, including Janos Adler, were brought to the German front. Narai states that János Adler stepped on a explosive mine in November 1942 and suffered a severe injury to his foot. As a result of his injury, he was transferred to the hospital Alekszejevka-Nikolajevka. In January 1943, he became a Soviet prisoner. He returned to Szeged from his imprisonment in August 1945.’ [Document in collection at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum]
89. As an oxidant, potassium permanganate can act as an antiseptic.
90. Doctor Grünwald was in charge of the Jewish group, as well as the improvised hospital. He was also assistant to captain Dr. Nagy, who was the surgeon in charge.
91. “I had an exact copy of the wedding ring made by the same jeweler in Szeged after my return. There are two dates engraved in it; the first date is our actual wedding date at the end of 1937 and then the other the day I came back from the Russian war prison camp in August 1945. The day Éva found me at the station. I still have that wedding ring, that one I didn’t swallow. That was the infamous month of August, but for me the month of return. It was a great month. But Jesus Christ, I will always remember how unhappy I was with those sticks, trying to stir that heap of shit. Trying to find my wedding ring, hopeless. Much shit and very little wedding ring. (laugh) But the marriage lasted! The marriage lasted!”
92. Beginning of January 1943
93. *Wattiert*- padded uniforms
94. Алексеевка Николаевка: The Battle of Nikolayevka was fought in January 1943, as a small part of the Battle of Stalingrad.
95. The primitive machine guns functioned beautifully in the icy cold, when the finely manufactured German Mausers froze and gave trouble. See: <https://skeptics.stackexchange.com/questions/34503/the-problem-with-freezing-oil-gun-for-the-firearms>
96. “The Soviet authorities gathered the French prisoners in Prison Camp 188, situated in the forest of Rada, near the town of Tambov in Russia.” (300 miles south-east of Moscow) Christopher Jory writes in *The Art of Waiting*: “The camp was never intended for human habitation. The prisoners slept underground, each bunker fifteen meters long, fifty men to each one, different nationalities all mixed together. The roofs were made of branches and packed earth and the walls were solid concrete. There was no light and no ventilation.”
97. “In Tambov, the conditions of detention are appalling. The prisoners survived in a frightful promiscuity and in a deplorable hygiene, sheltered by barracks dug on the ground to better withstand the terrible Russian winter when the temperature drops below -30 ° C. A little clear soup and about 600 grams of

black bread, almost inedible, constitute the daily ration estimated at 1340 calories [...]. It is estimated that about one out of every two men died in Tambov after an average period of internment of less than four months.” Extract from: *Malgré Nous*, by Eugène Riedweg. The author also notes that: “in comparison, in 1944, the prisoners of Auschwitz received 2,000 calories a day”. This statement was optimistic in the case of Auschwitz, where a prisoner received 1,300 to 1,700 calories according to the minutes of the trial of SS Hans Münch.

Testimonials see: <http://www.passionmilitaria.com/t39774-tambow-camp-de-la-mort-pour-les-malgre-nous>

98. Political re-education programs were part of daily routine for the prisoners of war in the camps in the Soviet Union. The prisoners attended lectures on the history of the Soviet Union and Marxist-Leninist doctrine and had direct anti-fascist content. These were supplemented with texts that were to be studied. Some camps had libraries and news-sheets were displayed on the camp walls. With the intention of recruiting for the communist cause – and probably with the goal of having a communist elite return to their own countries after the war, the prisoners were encouraged to become communists. Some prisoners thought it would ensure their survival and did just that. The political authorities in the camp sorted the prisoners into groups based on their political “enthusiasm” and would send the most promising to other camps for further schooling. Paraphrased from Hately-Broad, B. (2005) *Prisoners of War, Prisoners of Peace: Captivity, Homecoming and Memory in World War II*

99. *politricks*: political directorate

100. Dezső Nemes: Born Sept. 6, 1908, in Lőcse. Hungarian political and public figure; historian. Academician of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1964). “Of working-class origin, Nemes joined the Communist Party of Hungary in 1926 and became secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League in 1928. Imprisoned from 1928 to 1931, he was made a Secretary of the Budapest committee of the Communist Party in 1933 and was a member of the party’s Central Committee from 1934 to 1936. Nemes lived in emigration in the Soviet Union from 1931 to 1933 and again from 1936 to 1945, and he returned to his homeland in 1945. He was a Secretary of the Council of Trade Unions of Hungary (1945–48), head of a main administration of the Ministry of Public Education (1950–53), Director of the Szikra publishing house (1953–56), Director of the Higher Party School (1956), and Chief Editor of the newspaper *Népszabadság* (1957–61). See: thefreedictionary.com

101. Проверка: inspection (refers here to morning head count).

102. “Nemes was born to a Jewish family in Locse (now Levoca, Slovakia), which was a strongly middle-class town consisting mainly of German artisans and merchants. Nemes Dezső spent the years 1931-1933 and 1936-1945 in the Soviet Union.” Document from Radio Free Europe Research (1972) on the Hungarian Party Leadership > <http://osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/pdf/35-3-9.pdf>

103. A handwritten comment to the expression *Beamter Pubi’s hole*, is found on one of the transcripts sent to Jancsi for review. The note says: “orchestra pit under construction.” It seems to be a reference to a dream in Freud’s *Die Traumdeutung* from 1899.

104. подполковник: barker

105. “The production of winter salami was introduced to Hungary by Mark Pick, a master butcher of Jewish origin. In 1869 Mr. Pick settled down and established a salami factory in Szeged, Hungary. He developed and improved his business step by step. He made salami in larger quantities when he brought in workers from Italy in 1883. The large-scale production of salami was started in 1885. After the founder’s death in 1892, his widow and her brother managed the operation. Mark’s eldest son Jenő joined the enterprise in 1906. With him, a new period in the factory’s history began. He bought the nearby ‘Tian’ salami factory, which had become earlier bankrupt. This way the entire real estate near the Tisza River became the property of Pick family. Jenő Pick aspired to introduce changes with the help of modern tools. He recognised the significance of advertisement and had talent for business. Salami became the main product of the enterprise in the first decades of the 20th century. Between the two world wars, Pick factory became the most significant plant of the Hungarian food industry

and the Pick salami became a global brand. Jenő Pick ran the factory on his own from 1934 until its nationalization. According to the original recipe, winter salami was made of donkey meat. After a while, however, there were not enough donkeys left to slaughter in Hungary. Because of this a new solution had to be found and donkey meat was replaced with elder sow meat, which has a similar taste. One of the main characteristics of Pick Salami is that a coat of mold appears during drying and maturation. Mold fungi need a chilly temperature and a suitable humidity to settle down. Therefore, the factories were established at riversides, such as the original Pick Salami factory at the Tisza River”. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pick_Szeged access 20160403

The Pick family gave generous donations to the Szeged Jewish Community and was one of the major sponsors in building the new synagogue.

106. “I sent all those things and especially the winter coats back to Hungary in due course. They were much too heavy here and we could not wear them.” Evá’s comment.

107. *Valutenpolizei* - International economic police

108. *Aufschneider* - a braggart

Shiksa (Yiddish: shikse) is an often disparaging term of Yiddish origin that has moved into English usage (as well as Polish and German), mostly in North American Jewish culture, as a term for a non-Jewish woman or girl.

109. *Harvey*, starring Jimmy Stewart at the 48th Street Theatre.

110. Jingoism: Extreme patriotism, especially in the form of aggressive or warlike foreign policy. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>

111. János and Éva bought a condominium apartment in the resort of Palm Springs. János brother Denis and his second wife, Sylvia Betron (1918-2000) had an apartment in the neighboring building. Sylvia was from a Russian Jewish family, grew up in New York and at the time of this interview (1992) lived with Dini in Palm Springs.

112. *Neologs* are the segment of Hungarian Jewry which was more inclined toward integration during the era of emancipation in the 19th century. Religiously, the rabbis identified with them were influenced primarily by Zecharias Frankel’s Positive-Historical School, from which Conservative Judaism evolved as well. Their rift with the Orthodox was institutionalized following the 1868-1869 Hungarian Jewish Congress, and they became a *de facto* separate current, and are still the largest grouping among Hungary’s Jews today.

113. “*Nichts dauert ewig, der schönste Jud wird schäbig.*” - Nothing will last forever, even the most beautiful Jew will become shabby.

114. “*Ein jedes Tierchen sein Pläsierchen.*” *Mindenkinek megvan a maga bogara.* To each his own. .

SOURCES:

Transcripts of interviews with János & Éva Adler and Denis Adler conducted by Manuel Sellner during the 1990's.

Shoah interview # 12304 conducted by Sydney Burke on February the 21st, 1996 with Éva at her home, 7669 Woodrow Wilson Dr. Los Angeles, California, United States of America

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Donation box at the Jewish cemetery in Szeged

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Donation box at the Jewish cemetery in Szeged

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*I dedicate this work to the memory of Manuel Sellner.
For the children and their children.*

